SAT. SPECIAL / A3-1

Superman's superb update humanizes comics' mythology

METRO / A21

NBI chief, agents make up; Palace warns officials about airing dirty linen in public

NEWS / A2

Peers won't censure Iñiguez; Palace, CBCP on collision course

WORLD / A26

Don't rejoice, jihad will go on, Bin Laden tells Bush in new audio

Best bets for PNP chief: We're buddies, not rivals

By Luige A. del Puerto and Norman Bordadora

THE WAY THE CONCERNED PARTIES TELL IT, there is no lobbying or fighting for the top post of the Philippine National Police, which Director General Arturo Lomibao will vacate when he retires next week.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno yesterday

BEST/A16

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Saturday, July 1, 2006 ★★ 11 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 203 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Furniture made in Cebu scores in World Cup play

By Nikko Dizon

THE PHILIPPINES MAY NOT HAVE A HOME TEAM playing at the Fifa World Cup, but the ever-creative Filipino has managed to score a goal in Germany, with beautiful handwoven furniture made in Cebu.

Germany's football team is staying at Berlin's plush Schloss Hotel, which has furnishings by Dedon, a

FURNITURE/ A8

Comelec official faces impeach rap

MALACAÑANG PHOTO

REPLICA OF RIZAL MONUMENT IN MADRID: Escorted by Madrid Mayor Alberto Ruiz Gallardon (left) and her husband Jose Miguel Arroyo, President Arroyo lays a floral offering at the foot of the Rizal Monument at the Avenida de las Islas Filipinas.

MANO A MANO. President Arroyo receives a beaming welcome from King Juan Carlos I of Spain upon her arrival Thursday night at the royal office in the Palacio de la Zarzuela in Madrid. She's in Spain for a two-day official visit.

MALACAÑANG PHOTO

Anti-graft probers of 'Mega' deal cites Borra

By Nelson F. Flores

THE OFFICE OF THE Ombudsman yesterday said it had reached "factual findings" that could make Election Commissioner Resureccion Borra subject to impeachment over the P1.3-billion Mega-Pacific computerization deal but left it up to Congress to launch the proceedings against him.

The other officials of the Commission on Elections, including chairman Benjamin Abalos Sr., are still under investigation in connection with the deal, assistant Ombudsman Mark Jalandoni told a news conference.

The Supreme Court voided the deal two-and-half years ago on grounds that the Comelec disregarded the law and its bidding procedures when it awarded the contract to automate the counting of ballots to Mega-Pacific eSolutions Inc. The Comelec and Mega-Pacific have denied any wrongdoing.

The high tribunal had given the Ombudsman until June 30—or yesterday—to resolve its probe into the liability of any official.

The INQUIRER called Borra's cellphone several times to try and get his reaction but it appeared to be off.

COMELEC / A9

From colonizers to tourists: DOT lures Spaniards to RP

By Armand N. Nocum

MADRID, SPAIN (VIA PLDT)—They came by sea 485 years ago and ruled the country for three centuries. Still, despite the historic ties, only few Spaniards have come to their former colony to visit as tourists.

Now, 108 years after the Spaniards left, the Department of Tourism is planning to lure them back, also by sea—to invade and explore the Philippines' key diving sites, at least as scuba divers.

"Here in Europe, we play as niche player," Tourism Secretary Joseph "Ace" Durano said of the DOT strategy to focus on attracting Spain's two million "outbound" scuba divers to the Philippines, instead of trying to lure all of the 10 million Spaniards who leave their country for international travels yearly.

In a press briefing at the Gran Hotel Canarias, Durano said that of the two million scuba diving Spaniards, only about 8,000 had been coming to the Philippines yearly "with minimal intervention and engagement" from the government.

He said the number was a pittance compared to the 50,000 Germans who come to the Philippines, followed by the British and Russian nationals, the latter comprising the "fastest growing" group of foreign arrivals.

Durano is one of the Cabinet men in the 55-member delegation accompanying President Macapagal-Arroyo in her weeklong official trip to Rome and Madrid.

Durano said the Philippine delegation's trip to Spain had afforded the Filipinos a chance to make arrangements with airlines and tour operators to offer attractive dive and travel "packages" to Spaniards.

Durano, who also chairs the Philippine Commission on Sports Scuba Diving, said the trip had also enabled the delegation to "bombard" Spanish divers with

FROM COLONIZERS/ A16

Pacquiao: Hero from blood-and-guts battle

By Recah Trinidad

(The following is excerpted from the book "Pacific Storm" by the author now available in major bookstores .)

HE WAS A WARRIOR WHO fought his biggest battle and won.

All at once, he turned into the most recognizable, most salable face in the Philippines, country of his birth. But tonight, the winner, he of the windy hair and eyes of live coal, was fireless, flickering. Sick.

He had to wobble back to his chauffer-driven sports utility vehicle, in front of the vintage-1930 Rizal Memorial Stadium in Manila, onto the lap of his wife, a lovely mestiza.

Sorry, there was one final round to go.

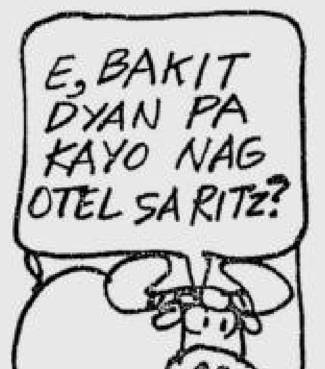
So he dragged on and parked by another celebration, maybe the millionth, in his honor. Before this, he had howled like a killer wind inside the boxing arena to topple a living monument to the sport, a Mexican boxing legend that had never been knocked out before.

Long live Manny Pacquiao, last name often mispronounced obscenely (PAC-QUEOOU) by international broadcasters.

With the sensational stoppage, Pacquiao, 27, jolted the seismograph of world boxing as though he had gained the purifying nod of the gods on Olympus. Actually, what Pacquiao captured in that big bout in Las Vegas was not a crown. It was the WBC International super featherweight belt, awarded to fighters ranked 11th or lower by the world boxing body.

There were also many other Fil-

PACQUIAO/ A9


E, BAKIT DYAN PA KAYO NAG OTEL SA RITZ?

Footloose solons slow on the draw

By Armand N. Nocum

MADRID, SPAIN (VIA PLDT)—Look who are slow on the draw.

Since some of the congressmen and government officials were paying their own way, they were slow to ask for the bill and took even longer to draw their wallets and pay for dinner.

Bukidnon Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri said this was one indication that congressmen and governors, who are part of the President's 55-man delegation, were not here on an all-expense-paid junket.

Some of the officials, like the Bukidnon congressman, were personally paying for their own expenses. For ev-

FOOTLOOSE/ A16

SUBIC RAPE TRIAL

Forensic doc fields questions as 'expert'

By Volt Contreras

LAWYERS FOR THE US Marines accused in the Subic rape case had tried to get one of the country's leading forensic experts as their witness—but lawyers for the Filipino complainant beat them to it.

This was disclosed yesterday in court by the sought-after witness herself, Dr. Raquel Fortun, who said she had "committed" herself to the prosecution about a month before the law firms of two of the defense lawyers approached her.

The hearing at the Makati Regional Trial Court took an amusing turn when she named the two defense lawyers—both of them present—as Benjamin Formoso, counsel for Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith, and Francisco Rodrigo, counsel for Staff Sgt. Chad Carpentier.

The two other defense lawyers are Jose Justiniano for Lance Cpl. Keith Silkwood and Enrico Uyehara for Lance Cpl. Dominic Duplantis.

Formoso and Rodrigo did not deny Fortun's statement, but said her disclosure might be tantamount to a breach of professional ethics.

Judge Benjamin Pozon, however, said he did not "see anything wrong with that" because there had been no formal engagement reached or consultation held between Fortun and the lawyers.

FORENSIC/ A8

REM ZAMORA

NO TO RALLIES AND FLOWERS. After dispersing the College Editors Guild ralliers who placed a wreath at the statue of Don Chino Roces, a cop also disperses their wreath.

Bush military tribunals illegal, rules US high court

WASHINGTON—IN A SHARP REBUKE of President George W. Bush's tactics in the war on terrorism, the US Supreme Court on Thursday (Friday in Manila) struck down as illegal the military tribunal system set up to try Guantanamo prisoners.

By a 5-3 vote, the nation's highest court declared that the tribunals, which Bush created right after the Sept. 11 attacks, violated the Geneva Conventions and US military rules.

The ruling, consisting of six separate opinions totaling more than 175 pages, restricted Bush's wartime powers in one of the most significant cases since World War II.

"We conclude that the military commission convened to try (Salim Ahmed) Hamdan lacks power to proceed be-

BUSH / A15

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming frequent rains over Western Visayas. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/06/30/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Palace, CBCP on collision course

By Michael Lim Ubac and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG AND CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS yesterday deplored the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines' open support for the direct involvement of Caloocan Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez in the impeachment drive against President Macapagal-Arroyo, saying it was tantamount to issuing a challenge to Ms Arroyo's rule.

"It's a green light for the Church's meddling in politics," said House Deputy Speaker for Mindanao Gerry Salapuddin.

Rep. Douglas Cagas of Davao del Sur said the CBCP's tolerance of Iñiguez's filing of an impeachment complaint against the President was a "clear violation" of the constitutional provision on the separation of Church and State.

The CBCP is "becoming a political group instead of being a moral anchor of Filipinos," said Cagas, noting that the separation of Church and State provision was being openly disregarded by Church leaders.

"Something must be done to correct this. The Church should lead the way in correcting the partisan politicking of some of its leaders," said Cagas, who is the vice chair of the House committee on constitutional amendments.

Yñiguez last Wednesday filed the third impeachment complaint to be filed at the House of Representatives in the last five days. The CBCP defended his action, bolstering the belief that anti-Arroyo sentiment in the Church was on the rise.

In Malacañang, Chief of Staff Michael Defensor expressed concern over the increasing participation of Church leaders in partisan politics which he said has unfairly turned political debate in the country into "a fight between good and evil."

Defensor said the perceived meddling of the Church in political affairs was confusing members of the Church, especially those who genuinely believe that the President won the 2004 elections.

"There are still people out there who are pro-GMA, who are at least 35 percent of the population based on the survey, whose beliefs are affected because they believe in their stand. The Church is making this as if this was an issue of morality or a fight between good and evil which it is not," Defensor said.

"They (Arroyo supporters) believe in their position and that they are committing no sin," he said.

"Church leaders do not have to join the already swollen ranks of the opposition, there are more than enough from the opposition to file the impeachment complaint other than them," Defensor said.

Salapuddin reminded the CBCP that the Church's role was to give "guidance and enlightenment and not to fuel political chaos."

"There is a thin line that separates this responsibility to purely political partisan activities like filing an impeachment complaint against the President as what Bishop Iniguez did this week," he said.

By spending more of their time on worldly matters like politics, Defensor said Church leaders are left with very little time to address the spiritual needs of the faithful.

"When they involve themselves in partisan politics like impeachment, that is not good especially if the bishop's own congregation have pressing problems that have to be addressed. That should be their priority," he said.

Undeterred, Iñiguez yesterday warned the country could find itself in the midst of another people power scenario if the new impeachment complaints are again junked by the House.

"It might come to the point when the step that we need is no longer written in the Constitution," Iñiguez said at the weekly Kapihan sa Newsdesk in Quezon City.

"But let us keep in mind of the wider interpretation of the Constitution. People power is still constitutional," he said.

But whether whether or not the people would want to take to the streets was another question, he said.

Iniguez said he was willing to be subjected to scrutiny to determine whether his deviated from Catholic doctrine.

"I have no problem about any scrutiny if that would make them happy, I'm not bothered at all," he said.

But he said the President should also "finally open herself to investigation so we'll finally know the truth about the allegations" that she manipulated the results of the 2004 elections.

Macalañang earlier appeared to have found a weapon against Iñiguez in the *Deus Caritas Est* (God is Love) encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI.

Ms Arroyo, who visited the Vatican last week, was given a copy of the encyclical which Malacañang said spelled out the separation between Church and State principle.

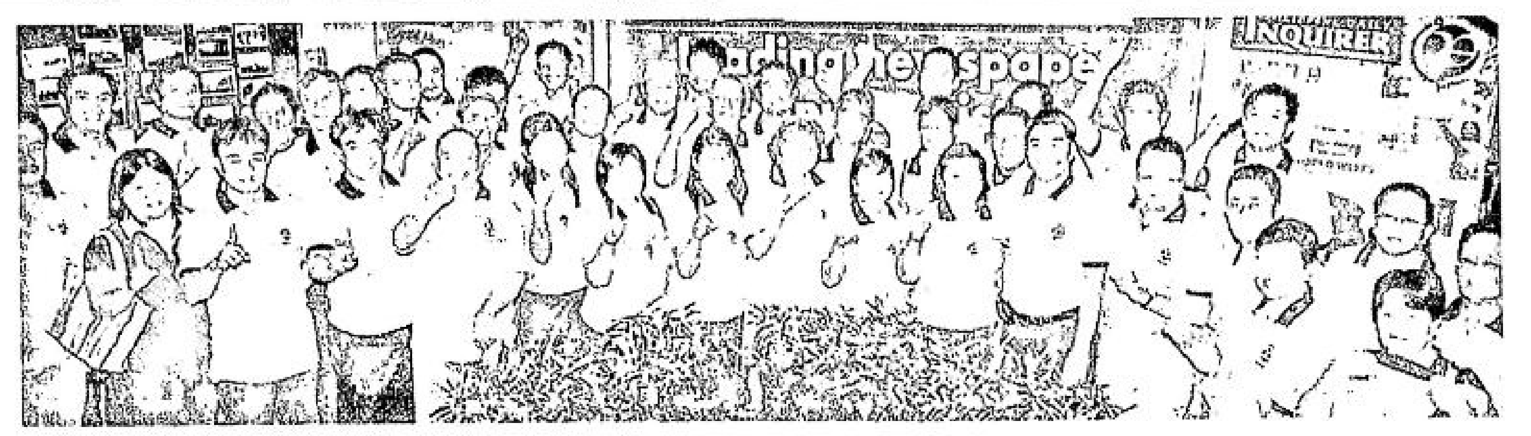
As a bishop, Iñiguez is bound by the encyclical, which is considered an infallible teaching of the Pope.

But Iñiguez claimed Malacañang merely lifted excerpts that would suit its political interest.

"I would not have pushed through with the impeachment complaint had I known that I would be violating the encyclical," he said.

He invited the public to read the full text of Item 28 of the encyclical, which defines the role of the Church and the State on matters of justice.

With Norman Bordadora and Christian Esguerra



NEWSDEALERS VISIT PDI

Philippine Daily Inquirer senior vice president for sales and marketing Rene R. Reinoso (front row, 5th from right), together with PDI circulation officers and field supervisors welcome 50 of the biggest newsdealers in Metro Manila who visited the INQUIRER office recently. Leading the newsdealers were Print Media Dealers Organization (PMDO) Chair Danilo Jose, Marikina Chapter President Eulogio Alfonso and Makati Chapter President Eduardo Sinajon. The INQUIRER supported the 2nd Print Media Dealers Organization convention held at the Development Academy of the Philippines Conference Center in Tagaytay City.

RUDY ESPERAS

Lagdameo rejects Palace call to sanction Iniguez

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—THE CATHOLIC Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has rejected Malacañang's call to sanction Bishop Deogracias Iniguez for joining opposition groups in filing an impeachment complaint against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

In a two-page statement, CBCP President and Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo said Iniguez's action falls within the teachings of the Church and was his personal option.

" … The CBCP respects Bishop Iniguez personal option and will not go with the suggestion of Malacañang to sanction him because he also agrees with CBCP statements on Politics and Moral Values," said Lagdameo.

Lagdameo said that in the encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI, a copy of which was given to the President, the pontiff said: "The just ordering of society and the state is a central responsibility of politics. As St. Augustine once said, a state which is not governed according to justice would be a bunch of thieves."

Lagdameo said Iniguez quoted this statement in presenting his personal position siding with the Kapisanan ng Makabansang Ekonomiya (KME).

"He clearly states that he is not bringing the CBCP in this personal option regarding the issue of impeachment," said Lagdameo.

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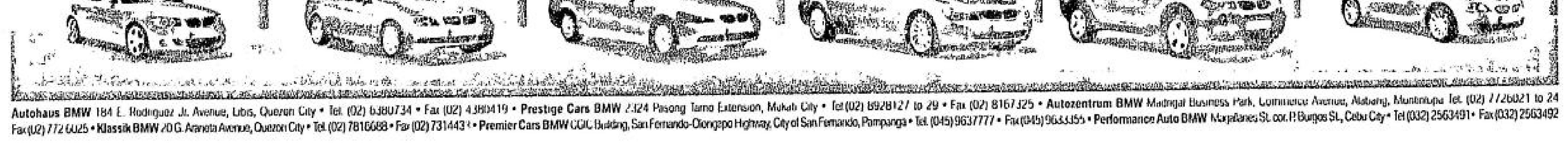

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SMART

SC orders Sandigan: Continue Danding trial

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE SUPREME COURT HAS ORdered the Sandiganbayan to proceed with the trial of one of the civil cases against businessman Eduardo Cojuangco involving the acquisition of shares in San Miguel Corp.

The Supreme Court en banc also denied the petition for a temporary restraining order by the Presidential Commission on Good Government to stop the anti-graft court from proceeding with the case while the SC resolves an earlier PCGG petition challenging the Sandiganbayan's denial of a motion for partial summary judgment of the civil case in question.

Civil Case 0033-F is one of eight coconut levy cases that the government filed against Cojuangco, a crony of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos who made the controversial businessman the administrator of the forced tax on the country's coconut farmers.

The cases revolve around the estimated P100 billion coconut levy funds collected from the small coconut farmers during martial law which, the government alleged, were used by Marcos, Cojuangco and their associates to buy shares in 82 corporations, including the United Coconut Planters Bank, its subsidiaries and 51 percent of San Miguel Corp. At present, the sequestered San Miguel shares are valued at about P50 billion.

The high tribunal said the PCGG failed to prove that there was an urgent need for a temporary restraining order.

The PCGG claimed that the TRO was needed as the continuation of the civil case would become unnecessary should the court decide in the PCGG's favor its petition against the Sandiganbayan ruling on its motion for summary judgment.

But the high court said the PCGG's claim was speculative.

"The ground on which it bases its urgent motion is the alleged futility of proceeding with the trial of the case. This assertion, however, is speculative, anchored on the mere supposition that the petition would be decided in its favor," the high tribunal said.

The Supreme Court also noted that even before the PCGG sought the TRO, the Sandiganbayan had suspended proceedings in the civil case even in the absence of any TRO.

Espinosa killers get life terms

By Jocelyn R. Uy

AFTER 17 YEARS OF INQUIRY, SEVEN judges and five deaths among the 12 accused, the search for justice for slain former congressman Moises Espinosa Sr. finally drew to a close yesterday.

Judge Manuel Victorio of the Makati City Regional Trial Court Branch 141 yesterday meted the guilty verdict on former Masbate vice mayor Florencio Fernandez Jr. and gunman Jimmy Cabarles for the killing of Espinosa on March 17, 1989 at the Masbate City airport.

Both were sentenced to life imprisonment.

"We are happy that for 17 years and [seven] judges have passed, justice has been served. A lot has been asking if there's still justice in the Philippines. But [for us], June 30 is the day when justice [existed]," said Mark Espinosa, who was only 17 when his father was killed.

In a 30-page decision, the court ordered Fernandez and Cabarles "jointly and severally" to pay the heirs of Espinosa P1 million for actual damages, P50,000 for moral damages and P300,000 for the lawyer's fees.

They were also directed to pay the heirs of Espinosa's security aides Gaspar Amaro, Artemio Fuentes and Antonio Cortez P100,000 each.

Fernandez was not present during the promulgation yesterday. He was reportedly suffering from severe hypertension, said his counsel, Romeo Sese, who presented a medical certificate to the judge.

Cabarles, on the other hand, has been reported dead, but not after he executed a sworn statement at Camp Crame on Sept. 5, 1989. The court, however, declined to dismiss his case as his lawyer failed to present to the court his death certificate.

Espinosa's counsel Alfredo Ligon requested the court to immediately issue warrants of arrest and hold departure orders against Fernandez and Cabarles.

The decades-old murder case tried 12 people, majority of them political rivals of the Espinosas.

Also accused in the case were former Masbate Mayor Susana Lim, her father Vicente Lim Sr., former Masbate Rep. Antonio Kho, former Masbate OIC governor Julio "Jolly" Fernandez (older brother of Florencio), provincial board member Nonilon Bagalihog, former Uson, Masbate mayor Nestor Lim, then Masbate provincial commander Jaime Liwanag and Ronnie Fernandez, who allegedly assisted Cabarles escape after the killing. Others accused were Zaldy Dumalag and Rene Tualla.

Jolly Fernandez was assassinated in 1992. Nestor Lim also died in 2003, although court records did not disclose the cause of his death. Kho, on the other hand, was acquitted in September last year.

Susana and Vicente Lim, though identified as among the slay plotters, were granted immunity after turning into state witnesses.

Liwanag was also reported dead but the defense panel failed to produce his death certificate during the trial. But he was acquitted yesterday along with Bagalihog and Dumalag, who was also said to have died, for lack of "competent and sufficient" evidence against them.

Meanwhile, the cases against Ronnie Fernandez and Tualla, who remain at large, were archived.

The court promulgation yesterday was emotional for Espinosa's daughter, ABS-CBN vice president for corporate affairs Maloli Manalastas.

When the court read out the verdict, Manalastas cried as her youngest brother, Mark held her hand and comforted her. But she left the courtroom right after the decision was read.

Mark hoped that justice would also be served in the killing of his brother, Masbate City mayor Moises Espinosa Jr., who was gunned down by five assassins while attending a fiesta in Barangay Bantigue in Masbate in 2001.

Cops eye political rivalry in Albano murder in QC

By Villamor Visaya Jr.
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau
and DJ Yap

ILAGAN, ISABELA—POLICE IN CAGAYAN Valley are not discounting the possibility that a political rival may have been involved in the assassination of Mayor Delfinito Albano on June 27 in Quezon City.

Chief Supt. Jefferson Soriano, regional police director, said among the leads they were pursuing included pending cases and the political rivalry between Albano and Isabela board member Jesus Cruz Jr.

"Even Albano's [rivalry with Cruz] is being probed to shed light on the killing. Everything is being considered as the Quezon City police are closely working with us to solve the case," Soriano said.

Cruz, however, downplayed his possible involvement, claiming he was innocent. "This is all part of the police investigation. However, they should [investigate] all angles to clear the names of the innocent. Do their job well and I will support them," he told the INQUIRER.

Cruz ran for mayor in 2001 but lost to Albano.

In 2004, Albano was reelected mayor while Cruz was elected board member of the first district in Isabela.

The conflict between the two worsened this year when Cruz pushed to evict the Ilagan government offices from the Isabela provincial museum and library. The local government had been holding office there after the municipal hall burned down in November 2004.

In Quezon City, meanwhile, investigators could not find any solid evidence to pin down the mastermind.

"All the evidence we have so far is circumstantial, so we cannot reveal the persons we suspect to be involved," said SPO3 Demosthenes Rebancos of the Quezon City Police District criminal investigation division.

Police also remained in the dark about the identity of the person Albano was supposed to meet on Tuesday night. Relatives earlier said someone had called the mayor after 10 p.m. and asked to meet him somewhere in the Scout area.

But on the way, he was stopped by three men wearing bonnets who shot him repeatedly inside the Villa Estela Poolside Bar and Cafe at the corner of Scout Santiago and Dr. Lazcano Streets in Barangay Laging Handa.

"He told no one in the family about that person or their planned meeting place. It was probably a personal thing," Rebancos said.

He added that there was still no feedback from Globe Telecom, from which they had sought help in tracking down the last person who called Albano on his mobile phone.

QCPD-CID chief Supt. Procopio Lipana refused to divulge details of the investigation, saying only that he was "optimistic" the police would be able to solve the case.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, July 1, 2006
12th Week in Ordinary Time
Blessed Junipero Serra

1st Reading:	Lam 2:2, 10-14, 18-19
Gospel:	Matthew 8:5-17

When Jesus entered Capernaum, an army captain approached him to ask his help, "Sir, my servant lies sick at home. He is paralyzed and suffers terribly." Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

The captain answered, "I am not worthy to have you under my roof. Just give an order and my boy will be healed. For I myself, a junior officer, give orders to my soldiers. And if I say to one: 'Go,' he goes, and if I say to another: 'Come,' he comes, and to my servant: 'Do this,' he does it."

When Jesus heard this he was astonished and said to those who were following him, "I tell you, I have not found such faith in Israel. I say to you, many will come from east and west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob at the feast in the kingdom of heaven; but the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown out into the darkness; there they will wail and grind their teeth."

Then Jesus said to the captain, "Go home now. As you believed, so let it be." And at that moment his servant was healed.

Jesus went to Peter's house and found Peter's mother-in-law in bed with fever. He took her by the hand and the fever left her; she got up and began to wait on him.

Towards evening they brought to Jesus many possessed by evil spirits, and with a word he drove out the spirits. He also healed all who were sick. In doing this he fulfilled what was said by the prophet Isaiah: He bore our infirmities and took on himself our diseases.

Commentary

This is the lamentation prayer of the prophets who were not heeded as history swallows up the temple, Jerusalem and the people who were not faithful. They cry to God for hope, for healing, and call the people to pour out their hearts and change. How strong is our faith and hope in God?

A Roman centurion comes to Jesus and says, "Command my servant to be healed." As a leader he knows the power of the word and he amazes Jesus with his faith.

When was the last time we amazed Jesus with our obedience to his word and expression of faith in our deeds?

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Gov't troops fire howitzers at MILF positions

By Jeoffrey Maitem,
PDI Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO CITY—ARMY GUNNERS YESTERday fired howitzers at positions of Moro rebels in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao, hours after international peace monitors left the area, the rebels said.

About 300 families have fled their homes in the wake of the fighting.

The military carried out the shelling at around 3 p.m., firing 10 rounds, but there were no casualties, spokesperson Eid Kabalu of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) told the INQUIRER by phone.

The INQUIRER called the military to verify the MILF report but military phones just kept on ringing.

Maguindanao police chief Senior Supt. Lumala Gunting said dozens of rebels had died since the firefight started on Wednesday and that the government had suffered no fatalities.

Kabalu said 17 militiamen and three rebels had been killed. He said no soldier was involved in the actual assault but the military had provided howitzer support.

There was no independent confirmation of the casualties because members of the ceasefire panels, together with the peace monitors, had difficulty getting to the area, according to Reuters.

The clashes started Wednesday when, according to the police, the rebels opened fire on policemen trying to serve arrest warrants on two MILF commanders allegedly responsible for last Friday's deadly blast in Shariff Aguak.

Correction

IN THE JUNE 26 issue, the article "Filipinos out in the cold amid World Cup fever" on page A1 misstated the year South Korea and Japan co-hosted an edition of the World Cup. The said countries co-hosted the 2002—not 2004—edition.

* * *

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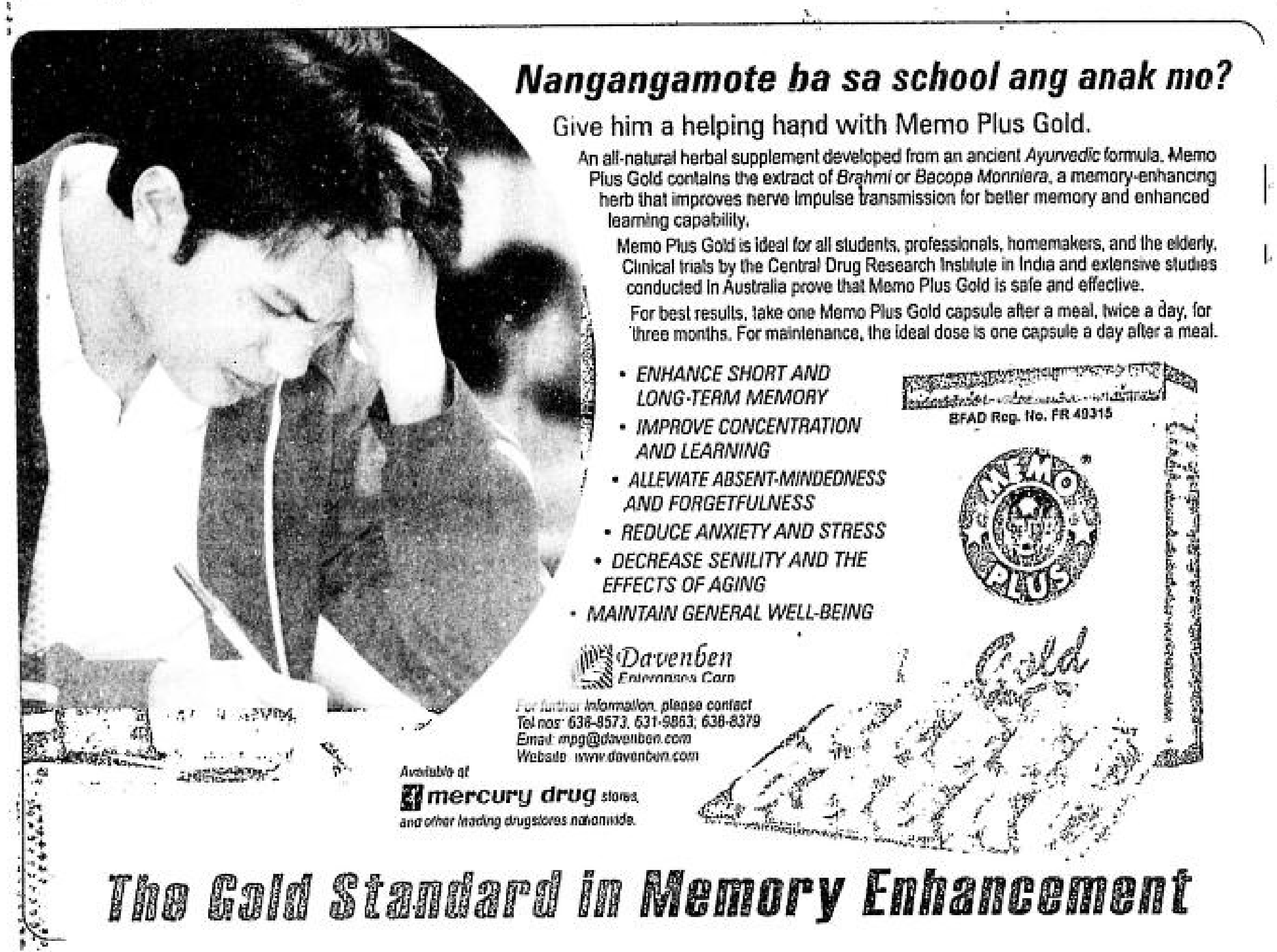
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DENR seeks custody of seized ivory

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND Natural Resources is seeking custody of the ivory statues, elephant tusks and scraps from the tusks seized by operatives of the Bureau of Customs from a religious shop in Manila last month.

DENR's Primo Capistrano said they have asked the Bureau of Customs to turn over the tusks and the ivory statues believed to have been produced from a large shipment of elephant tusks apprehended last year which had gone missing.

The BoC, however, balked, saying they would turn over the tusks next week when the BoC wraps up its investigation into how 6,000 kilos of tusks disappeared from the Asian Terminals Inc. where they had been kept.

"They said they were still investigating, so they need to keep the tusks, and that we did not need to formalize our request for custody," Capistrano, a member of the multi-agency team investigating the disappearance of the shipment, said in a recent interview.

The DENR, through the protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau, is the accredited custodian of all traded wildlife as mandated by the Convention on Illegal Trade of Endangered Species of flora and fauna.

The DENR, which is also doing a separate investigation into the entry of an unusually large shipment of elephant tusks in the Philippines, is hoping to receive the ivory images and tusks from the BoC next week.

Two shipments of tusks were apprehended last year, one at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport and another at the South Harbor. The ones at the Naia remain intact, but of the 6,000 kilos supposedly at the ATI, only two elephant tusks and a pair of rhinoceros horns are what remain of the shipment.

Joint operatives of the BoC and the National Anti-Environmental Crime Task Force (NAECTF) confiscated 94 different images made from ivory, 35 pieces of tusks and 81 kilos of scrap from the used tusks at the Our Lady of Manaoag religious shop in Sta. Cruz, Manila on June 6.

The seized items were believed to have been made from the 6,000 kilos of tusks that were reported missing from the South Harbor in May.

"Repeatedly we asked them to allow us to make physical inventory, but they did not agree," DENR-NCR regional technical director Perfecta Hinojosa said.

She, however, said that out of courtesy to a government agency, the DENR was leaving it up to the BoC to investigate its own people's liability for the missing tusks.

Believed to have been sourced from Africa, the tusks could fetch up to $100 per kilo, according to the DENR.

"Lusaka (Task Force) has to ascertain the source of the tusks through DNA testing," Hinojosa said.

She said the Lusaka Task Force, which arrived in the Philippines last month to look into the large tusks shipment, had sent samples of the tusks to a laboratory in Oregon.

The Philippines is being eyed as a new transshipment route of illegally traded wildlife, particularly elephants tusks.

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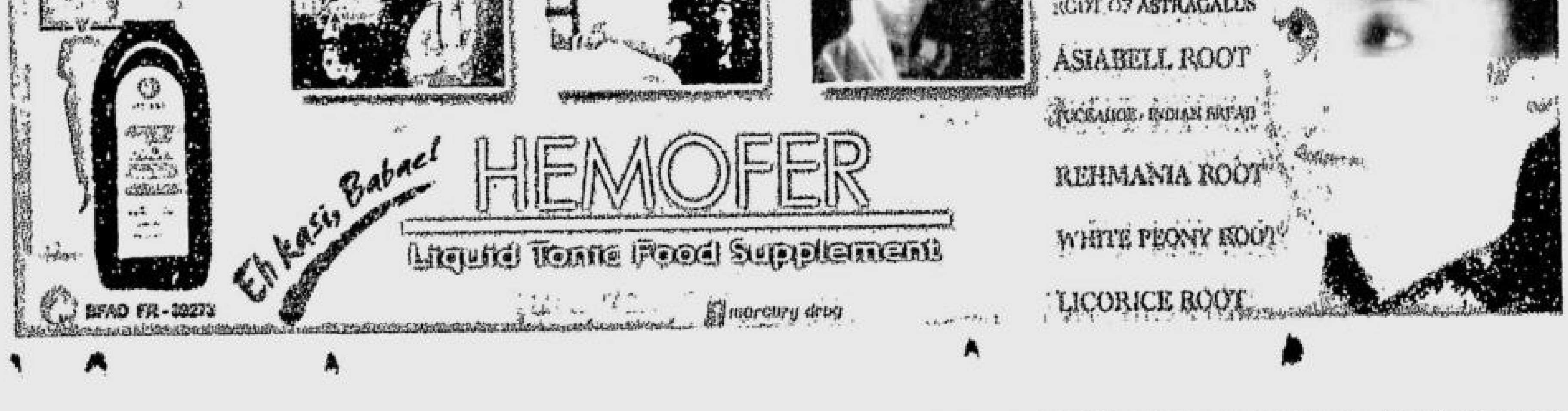
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Tagbilaran City

Little City With Big Dreams

on its 40th Anniversary Celebration as a Charter City

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MESSAGE

Today, Tagbilaran City celebrates its 40th year anniversary as a Charter City. To many people, it is not a good time to celebrate. With the prevailing economic and political crisis spawned by the unmistakable moral and spiritual crisis hounding the Filipinos as a people, the temptation to sulk and complain is great.

The choice facing most of us today is whether we give in to despair or not. Those who despair live lives of quiet desperation, going from one day to another merely to feed the body. Those who refuse to give up however have a lot of life left in them. A bright tomorrow awaits them not because they will stumble on it by accident but because they create opportunities to get there.

With a socialized elementary public education program that provides virtually all the necessary school needs for free, parents in the poorest brackets simply have to tide themselves during the storm. The future is bright for these children in whom the city government has invested heavily, some of them all the way from pre-school learning.

Tagbilaran's biggest resources are its people – God-fearing, law-abiding, hard-working and unassuming. They have the tools to make it to the next level. With a deeper faith in God and resolute belief in themselves, Tagbilaranons see only a bright future. Regardless of our individual spiritual persuasions, there is no doubt about the role that God plays in the destiny of people.

Of course, it helps that there are friends who stick closer than a brother. Manila Mayor Lito Atienza has been a constant source of inspiration, living up to his role as a Big Brother. More than just a mentor in the ways of public service, he has drawn the City of Manila much closer to Tagbilaran than the traditional sister city ties. I owe him so much for that.

There is nothing we can do about the past, little about the present but much about the future. This is the reason why we are investing heavily in our children today. It is the best legacy we can leave them and the best way to prepare them to be competitive when their turn is up.

Indeed, life begins at 40 for Tagbilaran, the Little City With Big Dreams.

With my fondest hopes,

MAYOR DAN NERI LIM
City Mayor

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And yet, these are merely indications of things to come in the city by the bay.

Life Begins at 40 for the people of Tagbilaran, the Little City With Big Dreams.

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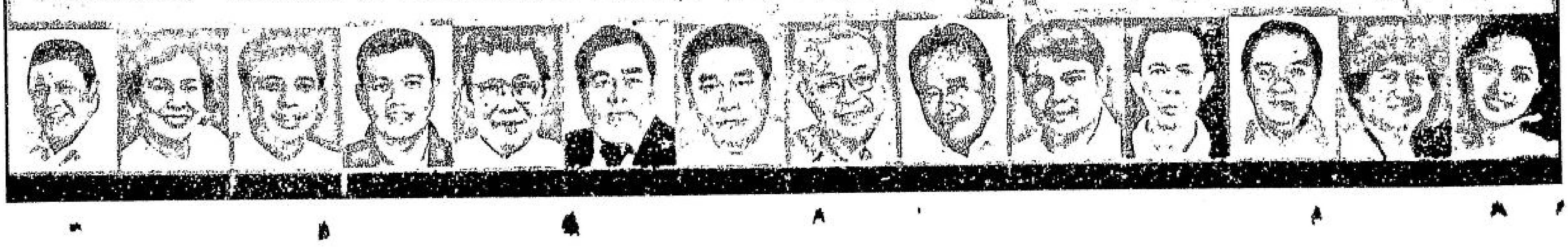

Nursing schools execs call for swift investigation of leak in board exams

By Luige A. del Puerto

DEANS AND FACULTY MEMBERS OF THE country's more established nursing schools yesterday called for a swift investigation into the reported leak in this month's nursing board exams.

They also urged the Professional Regulatory Commission to create an independent body to investigate the matter and suspend the release of the exam's results in the meantime.

The educators believe that what happened was a "manifestation of a deteriorating and highly commercialized nursing education, the mushrooming of nursing schools, and proliferation of review centers."

"We urge the PRC to immediately create an independent body for a swift and impartial public investigation of the alleged incident," they said in a statement signed by about 20 faculty members, including nursing deans of the University of the Philippines-Manila, the University of Sto. Tomas, and the University of the East Ramon Magsaysay.

The PRC last week denied there was a leak of test questions in this year's nursing exams, following rumors and a television news report that the leak had been traced to a review center in Baguio City.

Ninety-one nursing graduates in Baguio petitioned the PRC to place the members of the Board of Nursing under preventive suspension for the alleged leak during the board exams on June 11 and 12 in that city.

In a statement, the PRC said that "after an initial investigation by the Board of Nursing, the BON concluded there was no apparent leakage."

It said the examination system "had been so streamlined that leakages are now a thing of the past."

The last nursing board exam was administered nationwide on June 11 and 12. The exams are given twice a year in June and December.

What happened was "just the tip of the iceberg," said Josefina Tuazon, the dean of the UP-College of Nursing.

The reality is that there there are just too many nursing enrollees and nursing schools, but not enough hospitals to provide the clinical experience and not enough qualified and experienced teachers.

She expressed concern at the quality of the training that the nursing students are getting.

That the passing rate of nursing examinees was less than 50 percent points to the kind of education they are receiving, she said.

Tuazon noted that during the last board exams, there were about 42,000 takers.

"How are we producing them?" she asked.

In such a situation, "things are bound to happen" and for schools and students there is the "potential of thinking of other means just to get a better passing rate."

She also noted the cut-throat competition among review centers, some of which are offering courses or programs that should be taken by students in a proper nursing school.

Tuazon said she and other school officials raised their concerns with PRC chair Leonor Tripon-Rosero at a meeting yesterday.

She quoted Rosero as saying the PRC would act on the request to withhold the exam's results.

Rosero assured them that the PRC has a mechanism of getting to the truth, Tuazon said.

In a statement faxed to the INQUIRER, the PRC appealed to the public, especially the nursing examinees, not to believe reports circulating through text messages.

These messages included statements about the alleged cancellation of the June 2006 exams, payment of P900 for a reexamination, and the resetting of the exam in July, the statement said.

It said the PRC and the Board of Nursing will officially announce the results of the examination in two weeks time in leading newspapers and its website, www.prc.gov.ph.

As early as two years ago, the Commission on Higher Education already took note of the mushrooming of nursing schools.

The CHEd, which oversees all public and private colleges and universities, ordered a moratorium against new permits for nursing schools in 2004.

Senga not rushing probe of officers tied to coup plot

By Dona Pazzibugan

WITH THREE WEEKS LEFT IN OFFICE, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga is not keen on deciding the fate of officers involved in the Feb. 24 alleged coup plot before he steps down.

He said while he hopes the probe would be finished before he retires on July 21, he did not want to rush the probers.

Senga's under-one-year term of office also saw several other unresolved allegations against the military, including election cheating, wiretapping, torture, and the summary execution of activists and militant leaders.

"Well of course anyone would want to finish all that... but not for the sake of getting it over with. We want this done expeditiously but we want this done also very properly (where) everybody is given due process," he said.

A fact-finding board headed by Armed Forces Inspector General Rear Admiral Rufino Lopez started in April to investigate the alleged plot by the Scout Rangers and Marines to withdraw support from President Macapagal-Arroyo during the 20th anniversary of the 1986 People Power revolt.

In March, Army Inspector General Maj. Gen. Ferdinand Bocobo recommended court-martial against ex-Scout Rangers chief Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and 28 others allegedly involved in the plot.

But Senga tasked Lopez to consolidate the Army's investigation with that of the Marines which looked into the possible accountability of Col. Ariel Querubin and other Marine officers in the Feb. 26 standoff at the Marine headquarters.

An official privy to the investigation said the Lopez panel would announce its recommendations, including court-martial and other disciplinary proceedings, before Senga retires on July 21.

Senga stressed he wants all the officers involved to be given "due process."

"I hope it will already be finished because that is my guidance, to finish the investigation as soon as possible, but not at the expense of just hurrying it up, at the expense of poor investigation," he said.

He said he would rather concentrate on ensuring that the 10-year Philippine Defense Reform (PDR) Program is followed to upgrade the military's capabilities and organization.

Senga assumed office on Aug. 15. In her five years in office, Ms Arroyo has appointed seven chiefs of staffs (including Senga) who all served terms of less than a year.

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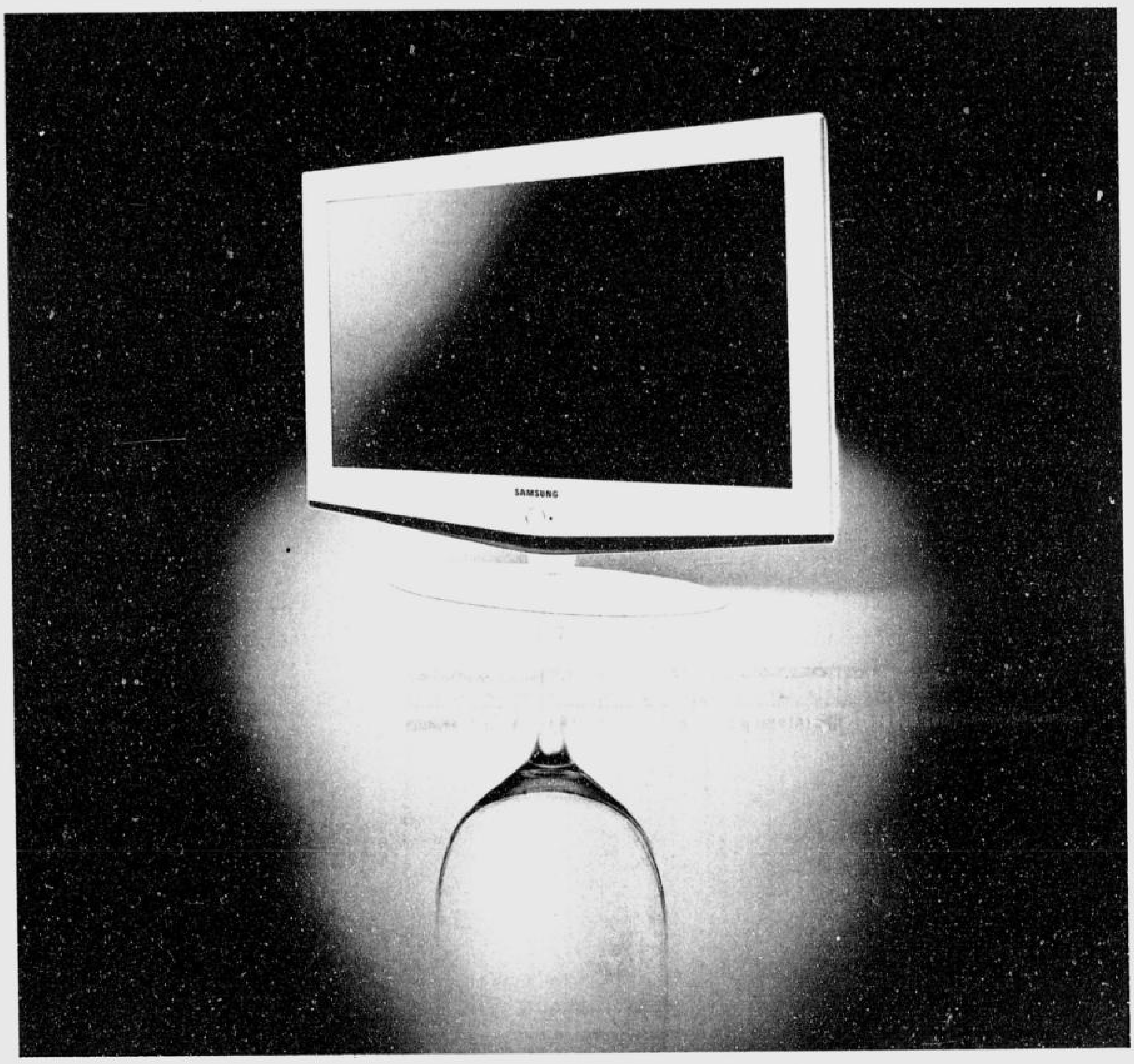

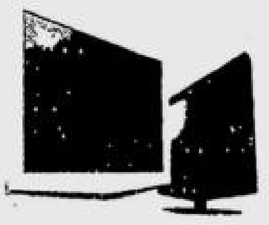

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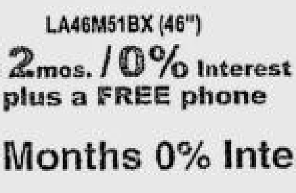

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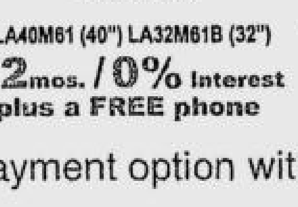

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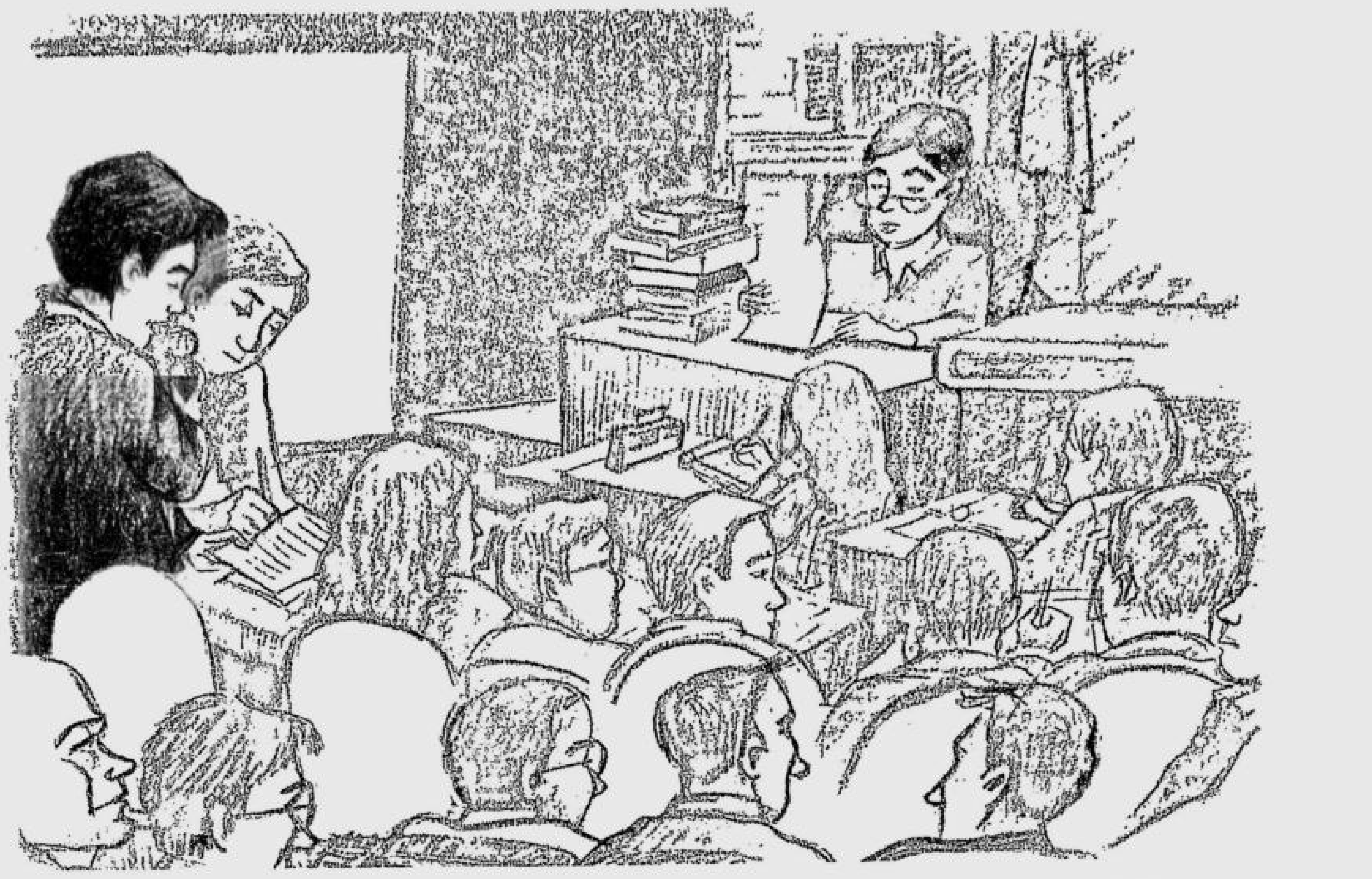
Forensic doc fields questions as expert witness



SOUGHT-AFTER
Both the defense and the prosecution wanted forensic expert Rachel Fortun (at right) to be their expert witness but the prosecution got to her first. STEPH BRAVO

From page A1

Also at the hearing, the prosecutors said they would call the 22-year-old complainant, "Nicole," to the stand after Fortun had completed her testimony.

'Expert witness'

Private prosecutor Evalyn Ursua presented the US- and Japan-trained Fortun as an "expert witness" and took three hours just detailing the forensic pathologist's 12-page resumé, particularly her expertise in cases of sexual assault.

The defense panel, in turn, questioned Fortun's credentials. Rodrigo did not take part in the grilling, but Formoso tossed a few questions concerning the track record of the very same witness he had earlier tried to enlist.

Pozon is expected to issue a ruling on Thursday on whether Fortun qualifies as an expert witness.

Only afterward can Fortun give her "opinion" on the medical findings on Nicole and on the chemical analysis conducted on the various physical evidence presented by the prosecution.

Formal training

On direct examination regarding her qualifications, Fortun described herself as "one of the only two formally trained" forensic pathologists in the Philippines, the other being Dr. Ma. Cecilia Lim.

By "formal training," she meant studies taken abroad for a one-year course on forensic pathology.

She said that as far as she knew, no other Filipino pathologists had completed the course because it had yet to be offered in the country.

Fortun's expertise—mainly in the identification or examination of corpses—has been sought in various high-profile cases and major disasters.

These include the Ozone Disco fire, the Payatas dump "trash-slide," the Asian Spirit crash, the Chiong sisters rape case in Cebu, the Damas de Associacion de Filipinas orphanage fire, the unexplained death of Navy Ensign Philip Pestaño, and the murder of publicist Bubby Dacer and his driver.

Fortun said she had analyzed 10 to 20 cases of sexual assault—involving both living and deceased victims—since she started practice in 1995. (She explained that she did not use the term "rape" in her discipline, pointing out that it was "not a diagnosis but a matter of jurisprudence for the court to decide.")

First time

On cross-examination, however, Fortun said the Subic rape case might be the first time she would testify as an expert witness because those previous sexual assault cases never reached the trial stage.

This angle was pursued by Justiniano, who also pointed out to the court that Fortun's resumé included her involvement in a unit under the Philippine General Hospital that "helps female victims" of sexual abuse.

At one point Justiniano asked Fortun if she belonged to any "cause-oriented group," to which she answered no.

The lawyer also confronted Fortun with her findings in the Pestaño case, wherein she concluded that the ensign might have committed suicide—contrary to the finding of a Senate inquiry that he was more likely murdered.

"So the Senate did not believe you?" Justiniano said.

"It's their prerogative. I gave my opinion," Fortun retorted.

Upon questioning by Ursua, Fortun said the private prosecutor first asked her to be an expert witness for the prosecution around the first week of March.

On April 5, Fortun recalled, she received a fax message from the office of Formoso and later a phone call from the lawyer asking "if I could help and join them."

She said she had to turn down Formoso "with regrets ... because I had already committed myself" to the prosecution.

On April 5 or 6, Fortun added, the office of Rodrigo also approached her "indirectly." The request was relayed to her in a text message by her father, retired lawyer Benjamin del Rosario, she said.

Calling a spade

In an off-court interview, Ursua said she was confident that Fortun knew "the responsibilities of an expert witness," which was to render an opinion based on the facts given to her.

"She will call a spade a spade. She will not slant her science" just to favor Nicole or the accused, Ursua said.

Furniture made in Cebu scores ...

From page A1

German furniture company which imports handwoven furniture manufactured in Mandaue City, Cebu.

The German team was reported as relaxing at the hotel in Dedon chairs, described as "beautiful pieces of furniture [which are] made in the Philippines," the Philippine Embassy said in a statement to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

From TV features to an article in Germany's national paper, Die Welt (The World), the German team was described as lounging in Dedon furnishings, reported as "luxurious furniture" manufactured in the Philippines, the embassy said.

Dedon is owned by Bobby Dekeyser, former goalkeeper of leading German football club Bayern Munich. He established a furniture plant in Mandaue in 2001 with an initial capital investment of P14.3 million.

'Mecca for weaving'

Dedon's website describes Cebu as the "Mecca for the traditional art of weaving."

Of Dedon's 2,800 employees all over the world, more than 2,000 are working in its Cebu manufacturing plant, including a 100-man research and development team.

"Without Cebu, Dedon is nothing," Dekeyser was recently quoted as saying in a press release."

For its products, Dedon uses a strong, synthetic fiber called Hularo, developed by Dekeyser when he began his company in the late 1980s.

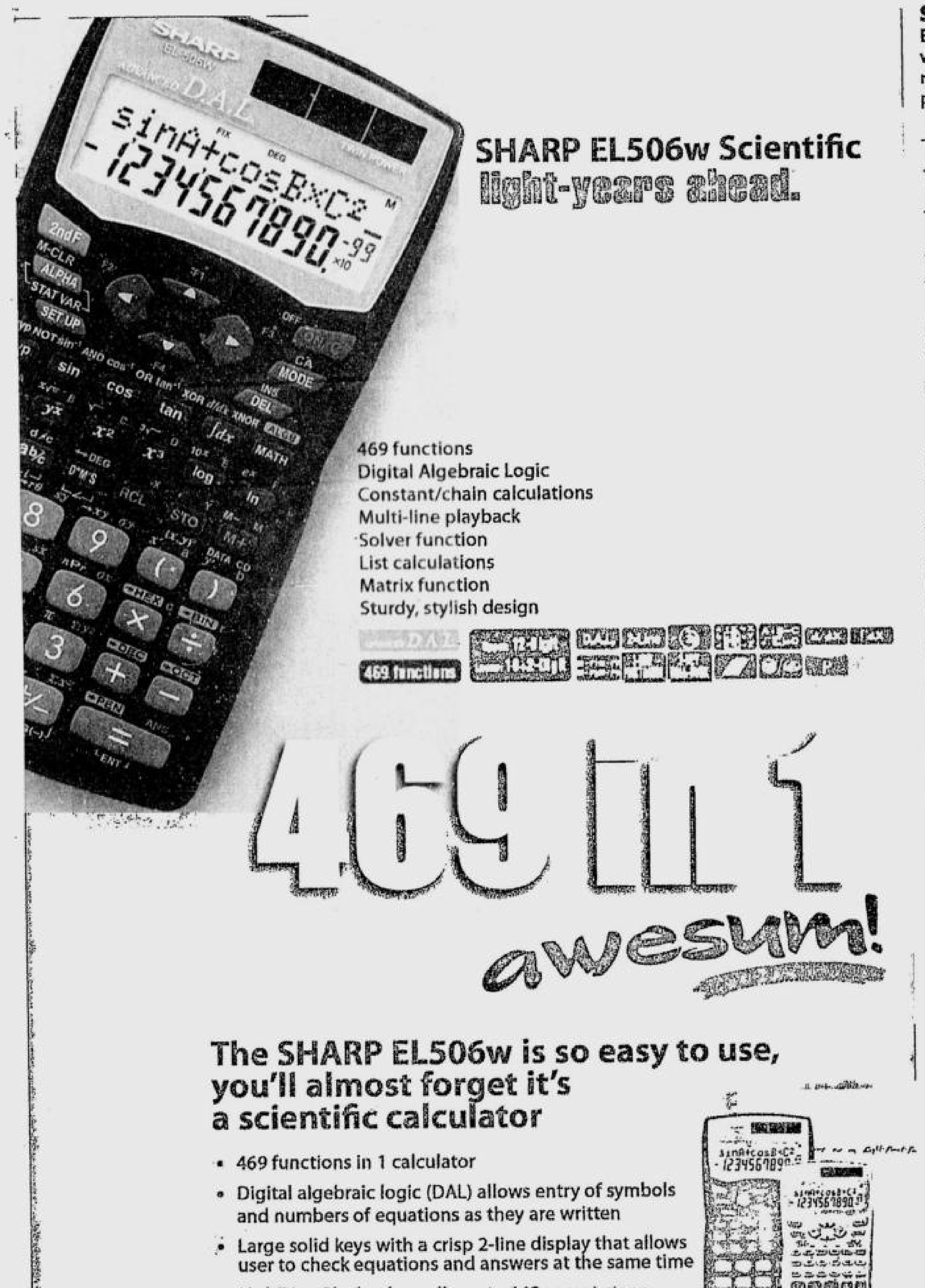
The Hularo fiber, developed by Dekeyser's grandfather and produced in Luneburg, Germany, is "extremely tear-proof, colorfast, weatherproof, resistant to UV light, and environmentally friendly, while tremendously versatile in color and shape," according to the DFA.

The fiber is handwoven into unique furniture pieces by the Filipino artisans in Cebu. The furniture pieces are then brought to Dedon's showrooms in Austria, Spain, and of course, Germany.

Blend of craft, technology

According to the DFA, Dedon furniture "is always greeted with enthusiasm and sets international standards." The company has received many awards and is recognized by trade associations.

"This latest marketing coup of Dedon has once again highlighted the beautiful blending of German technology with Philippine craftsmanship in the furniture industry. Truly, the Philippines has scored big at the World Cup," Delia Albert, Philippine ambassador to Germany, said in the DFA statement.



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Comelec exec Borra found liable for P1.3-B deal

From page A1

Jalandoni said the Ombudsman had submitted a compliance report to the high court.

In a press statement, the Ombudsman's office said it had adopted a resolution "which contained factual findings that can be used by the House of Representatives to initiate impeachment proceedings against Comelec Commissioner Resureccion Borra."

Acting overall Deputy Ombudsman Orlando Casimiro, in a press conference, said Borra was being cited for:

- "Allowing the Comelec's Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) to declare Mega-Pacific Consortium (MPC) eligible to participate in the bidding process for the project;
- "For allowing material deviation from the bidding requirements; and
- "For recommending to the BAC that the award be given to the MPC despite its ineligibility and technical failure."

However, Casimiro said the Ombudsman had no jurisdiction over an impeachable official like Borra, hence its recommendation to leave the matter to Congress.

Ineligible to bid

"We are placing him (Borra) at the disposal of the House of Representatives," Casimiro said.

Reached for comment, Abalos said in mixed English and Filipino: "I can only comment after I get the copy. If I'm off the hook, thanks, but I feel bad if they found liability on some people *kasi wala naman akong nakikitang kasalanan ang mga tao* (because I do not see anyone having committed a wrongdoing)."

In a 34-page resolution, the Ombudsman named Borra as the project head for one phase of the automation project.

Records showed that the MPC was ineligible to participate in the bidding for the automation of the election system as it failed to present documents that the individual entities of the said consortium actually formed a group to be known as Mega-Pacific Consortium, Casimiro said in a statement.

At the same time, the Ombudsman had ordered the dismissal of Comelec BAC chair Eduardo Mejos, and lawyers Jose Balbuena Jr., Lamberto Llamas, Bartolome Sinocruz, and Gideon de Guzman, all BAC members, according to Casimiro.

Grave misconduct

He said they were removed from the service after being found guilty of grave misconduct and conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service as provided for under Republic Act 3019 (Anti Graft and Corrupt Practices Act) in connection with the Mega-Pacific deal, Casimiro said.

The Ombudsman also recommended the filing of information for violation of RA 3019 against private respondent Willie Yu, Bonnie Yu, Enrique Tansipek, Rosita Tansipek, Pedro Tan, Johnson Fong, Bernard Fong and Lauriano Barrios, all of Mega-Pacific eSolutions, Incorporated.

The Ombudsman dismissed the complaint against Jaime Paz and Zeta Buena Castillon of the Comelec, Jose Tolentino and Rolando Viloria of the Science and Technology Department for lack of evidence.

Who approved the deal

The Mega-Pacific contract was approved on April 15, 2003, by Abalos, and Commissioners Luzviminda Tancangco (now retired), Rufino Javier (ret.), Ressureccion Borra, Ralph Lantion (ret.), Mehol Sadain (ret.) and Florentino Tuason Jr.

Abalos insisted that the Mega-Pacific deal was above board. He, Borra and Tuason have rejected repeated calls for their resignation.

Last December, the Senate demanded the resignation of all but one of the election commissioners for the "egregiously fraudulent" contract for the 2003 purchase of the automated counting machines. Commissioner Felix Brawner was not asked to resign because he had yet to be named to his post at the time.

A Senate blue ribbon committee report had found the commissioners and the members of the awards committee liable for prosecution for the "Comelec modernization scam."

The Senate report echoed the SC ruling which nullified the contract and ordered the Comelec to recover the P1.05 billion already paid to the Mega Pacific consortium.

The Senate panel found that the awards committee had manipulated the bidding to favor the consortium and held Abalos and six other commissioners accountable for awarding the contract to the consortium. It also said the mass resignation of the commissioners was necessary in view of the forthcoming elections in 2007.

"The integrity of the Comelec has been irreparably compromised; it is a damaged institution, slouched crab-like and weighed down by this ugly and forbidding anomaly," the Senate committee said.

It said the computerization contract was awarded despite the award committee's own report that the machines had failed the technical tests of the Department of Science and Technology. This, it said, showed that the Comelec could not deliver an acceptable computerization system.

It also said that while the Comelec had awarded the project to Mega Pacific, the contract it executed was with a different entity, Mega Pacific eSolutions Inc.

Last month, Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez asked the high court to reconsider its resolution directing her office to resolve the case by the end of June.

Gutierrez had said that the high court's directive had no precedent since the antigraft body, a constitutional office, was established in 1989.

Ombudsman castigated

She also cited numerous Supreme Court decisions affirming the independence of the Office of the Ombudsman "from outside pressure and improper influence."

The Supreme Court two weeks ago castigated the Office of the Ombudsman for "holler(ing) so brashly" about its constitutional independence, while conveniently "shirking" its duty to act promptly on complaints filed before it.

In its resolution, the SC reiterated its order for the Ombudsman to determine by June 30—under pain of contempt—whether probable cause existed to charge Comelec officials who approved the Mega Pacific deal. *With a report from Jerome Aning and PDI Research*

Pacquiao: Hero . . .

From page A1

ipino world boxing crown-holders before Pacquiao. In fact, Pacquiao had already reigned twice as world champion, in the flyweight (WBC) and super bamtamweight (IBF) divisions. But no outpouring of the fire and magnitude bestowed on the fearless warrior after his last triumph in Las Vegas had been accorded a living Filipino before.

Record turnout for homecoming

There had been record turnouts for luminaries like world flyweight boxing champion Pancho Villa (Francisco Guilledo in real life) in 1925, martyred former Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino in 1983, and movie king Fernando Poe Jr. in 2004. But admirers showed up in full force only during the funerals of these folk heroes.

In Pacquiao's case, chroniclers could no longer measure the crowds during his homecoming.

It did rain sporadically in the motorcade prepared by the city government of Manila, but countless fanatics pushed and shoved—old women in tears waited and waited on the side street way past sunset—for a glimpse of the hero, now a glowing deity on a float. The swarm of humanity resembled the mindless charge during barefoot processions for the miraculous Black Nazarene in Quiapo that counts Pacquiao among its devotees.

It was not what economic doctors had prescribed for the impoverished nation. But the expected happened. Pacquiao's victory sent his poor nation tilting in ecstasy. He lit the bleary eyes of poor countrymen, thereby making it appear he had instantly knocked out poverty and assorted national aches with the Alaxan relief tablet he had been selling hard on television.

He had not.

Pacquiao did not usher in abundance. But his win-win feat was definitely noble, rich in relevance. Here was one genuine hero who was no product of fantasy—no borrowed courage, no artificial toughness, no rented heroics, no false sideburns.

Unlike movie stars and entertainment icons that had freely stolen the adulation of gullible Filipinos, this big winner was emerging from a real blood-and-guts battle, no longer starring in a shallow blockbuster movie.

Intoxicating to Pinoys

The social analyst was right. Filipino faith in Pacquiao appeared to have grown stronger because they saw in him their own resilience and ability to come back from defeat. As a result, Pacquiao's conquest also intoxicated his countrymen.

Every Filipino now wanted a piece of the hero, or maybe the whole of him. They craved for the entire narcotic.

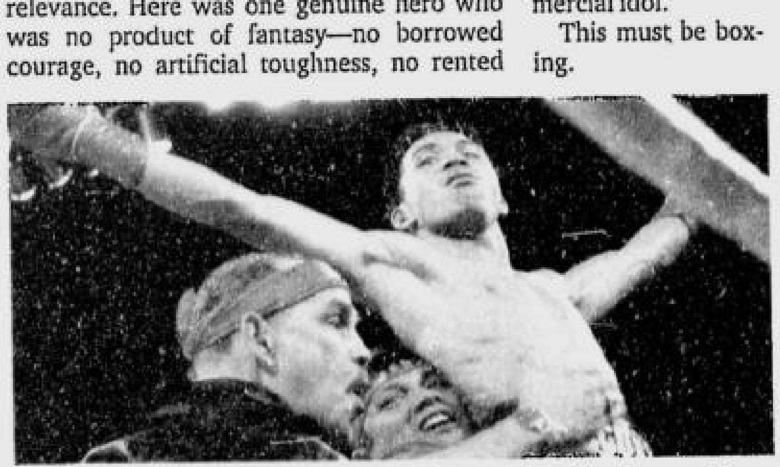
Sorry, Pacquiao was trying hard to explain, but a million other Pacquiaos would not do.

Pacquiao, son of a runaway father, knew quite keenly how it was to be very hungry. He spent his boyhood in extreme poverty, often sleeping on the cold, bare floor without dinner, a tragedy suffered by countless poor countrymen today.

Pacquiao knew one thing: His hope of rescuing his countrymen from the claws of corruption and crippling hunger will remain just that: a dream.

Meanwhile, the embattled government of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, accused of stealing the vote, did not hesitate to overfeed the hungry with the boxing hero. Pacquiao has also been made into a movie and commercial idol.

This must be boxing.



A MANNY PACQUIAO celebration after another title victory, this time in 2003.

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Still no trace of abducted UP students in Bulacan; Army denies involvement

THREE LEFT-WING ACTIVISTS were abducted by masked gunmen in Bulacan province, a human rights group said yesterday. The military commander in the area denied involvement while claiming the missing persons were communist rebels.

Two women student activists from the University of the Philippines and a male companion were seized before dawn on Monday from a farming village outside Hagonoy town, said Marie Hilao-Enriquez, secretary general of the human rights group Karapatan.

They were blindfolded and forced to board a passenger minibus at gunpoint, Enriquez said.

She said more than 170 left-wing activists and suspected communist rebels have been victims of "forced disappearance" since President Macapagal-Arroyo took office in 2001.

Juan Paolo Alfonso, chair of the University of the Philippines Student Council, said witnesses reported the gunmen removed a shirt worn by one of the women, Karem Empeno, and used it to blindfold her.

"Who else would have the motive to do this but the military," Alfonso said.

Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, commander of the Army's 7th Infantry Division that operates in the region, said the three were members of the communist New People's Army and were collecting money from fishpond owners in the area.

He said, however, that none of his troops reported holding the activists, although other military groups outside his command, particularly intelligence units, may have seized them.

"According to our investigation … many people are happy that they have disappeared because they have been threatening and extorting money from them, so we are happy as well that they are gone, if it's true that they are gone," he told The Associated Press.

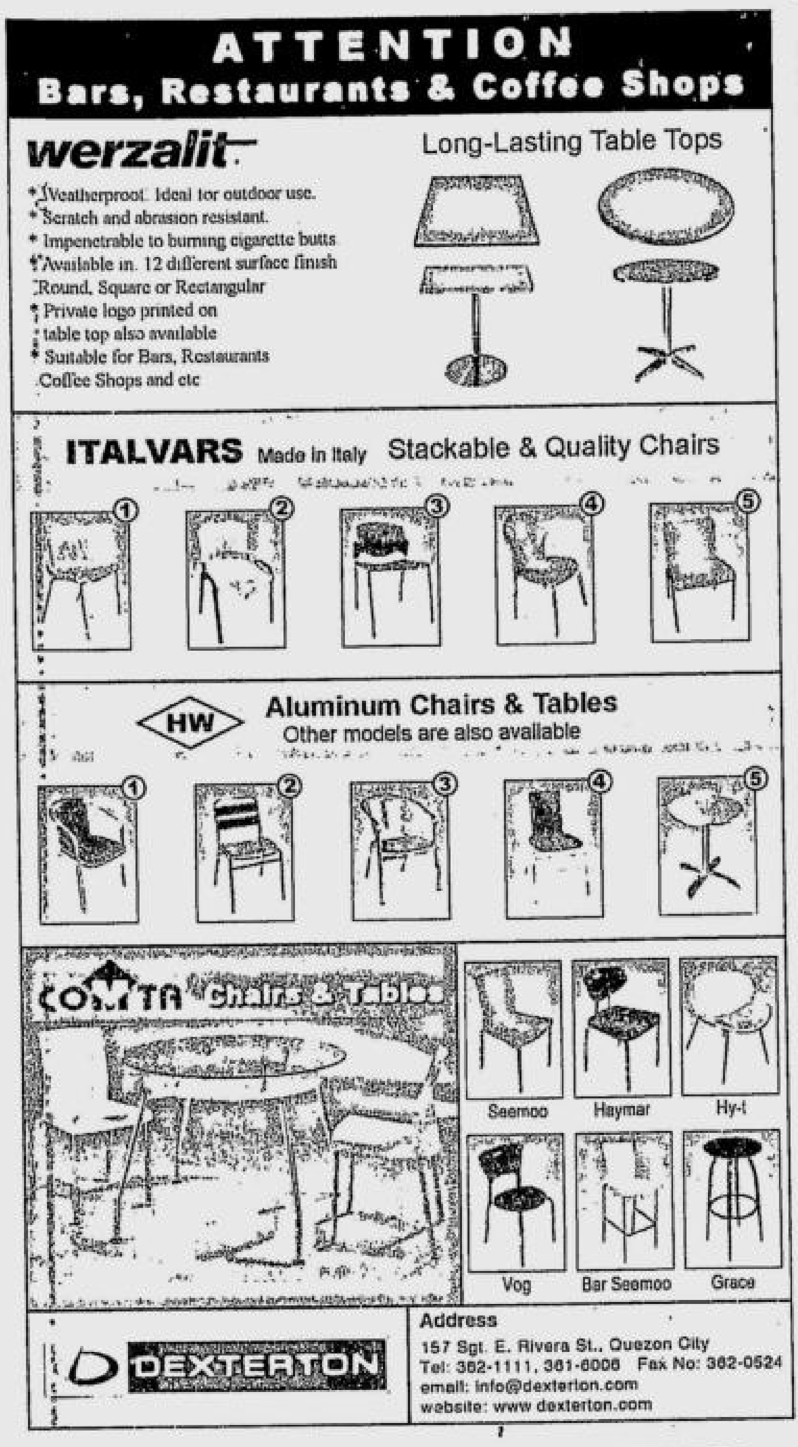
Alfonso said Empeno was a sociology major doing research in farming communities in Hagonoy, a seaside town about 40 kilometers northwest of Metro Manila, for her graduation thesis.

The second woman, Sherlyn Cadapan, who is pregnant, is a former student council officer at the university who works as a researcher for a farmers' group in Bulacan province, which includes Hagonoy. No background was immediately available on the third person, Manuel Merino, Alfonso said.

Karapatan has reported that in addition to the abductions, more than 600 left-wing activists and their supporters have been killed, allegedly by government security forces, or their agents since 2001.

The President has announced a tough new campaign against communist rebels, backing it with the release of P1 billion to buy attack helicopters and other equipment for government forces to finish off the 37-year-old insurgency. *AP*

UP STUDENTS hold rally inside the UP Diliman campus Friday to demand the immediate release of two abducted UP students in Bulacan. JOAN BONDOC



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Cebu priest charged with m

Cleric earlier accused of rape but charge

CEBU CITY—A CATHOLIC PRIEST being hunted by police on child abuse charges showed up with his lawyer at the court of Judge Sylvia Aguirre-Paderanga in Danao City and posted bail of P200,000 just before 5 p.m. yesterday.

Paderanga last Thursday issued a warrant of arrest against Fr. Jose "Joey" Belciña on charges of child abuse for allegedly having sexual relations with a minor.

Police twice visited the Cebu Archbishop Palace compound but failed to find Belciña, who had been staying at the Archbishop's official residence after he was relieved of his parish duties in Danao over the sex scandal.

The priest was accused of rape by his teenage ward but a special panel of prosecutors that investigated the complaint recommended that Belciña instead be charged for the lesser offense of child abuse.

The panel

The panel, headed by assistant prosecutor Fernando Gubalane, said it dropped the rape charges against the 36-year-old parish priest of the St. Francis of Assisi Church in Maslog, Danao City, because "there were no elements of rape found in the case."

The three elements of rape—force, threat and intimidation—were absent in the three instances that the priest and the young girl had sexual relations, the prosecutors said.

But he should be charged with child abuse since the girl was only 17 years old during the first incident, the prosecutors said.

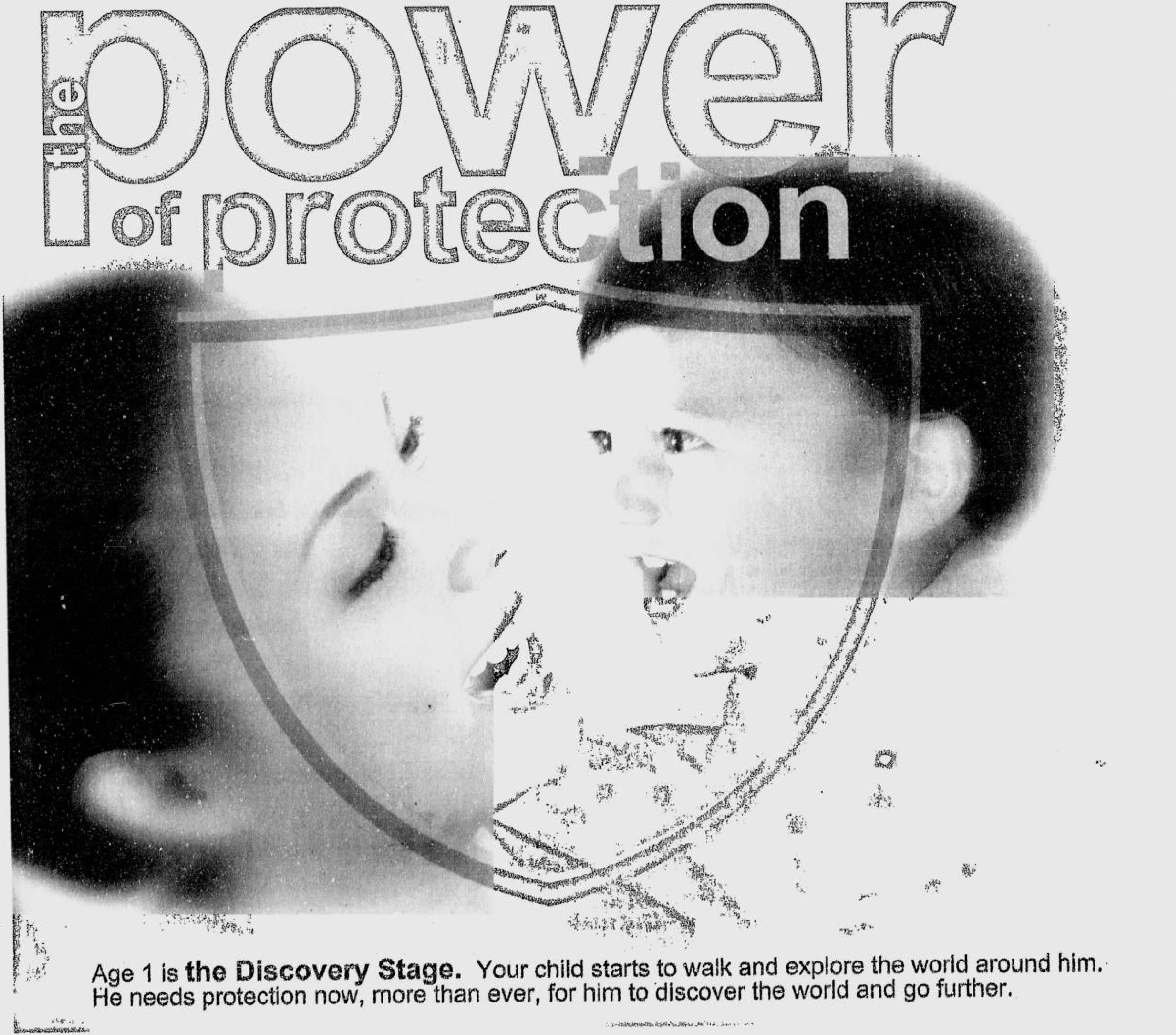
Belciña's lawyer, Gloria Lastimoso-Dalawampu, said would question the Dana cutor's filing of charges her client as Belciña still ceive the official copy of lution of the special panel cutors.

Dalawampu said she wo motion for reconsideration there was no basis in the tors' findings that sexu course had occurred betw priest and the girl.

No sexual relationship

Belciña has repeatedly having sexual relations girl, or that he had raped

Supt. Larson Dechino, ch Danao City Police Office, Achilles Dakay, the arch spokesperson, had told the not know where Belciña



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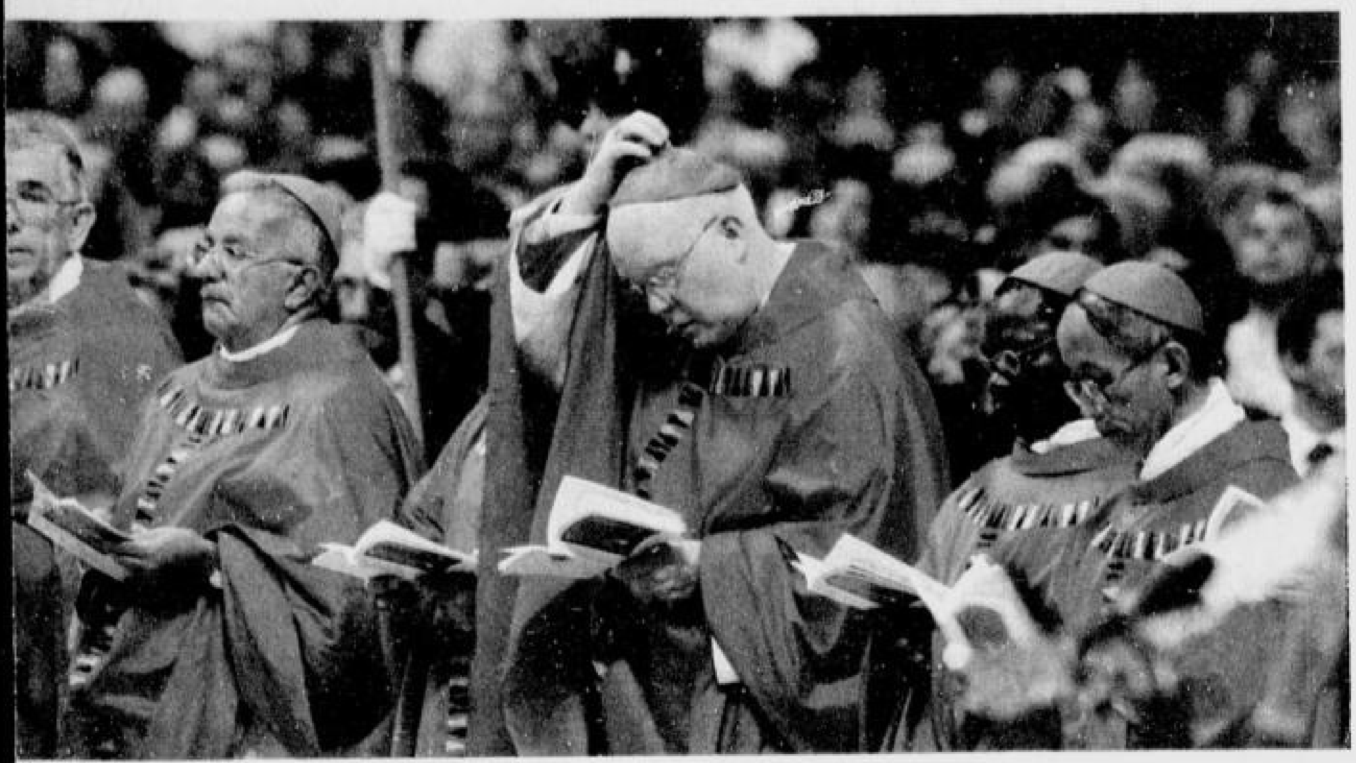

HOPS IN ROME
hbishop Antonio Javellana Ledesma (at extreme right) of Cagayan de Oro, joins 26 other Catholic bishops from around world in a Mass at St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican Thursday, June 29, 2006. The Pope bestowed the pallium, or a woolen wl, on the archbishops to symbolize their bond with the Vatican. AP PHOTO

Singapore cops arrest Pinay after compatriot dies in fall

SINGAPORE—SINGAPORE POLICE YESTERday arrested a Filipina maid after a compatriot with whom she had been overheard arguing was found dead outside a highrise building after an apparent fall.

Assistant Superintendent Victor Keong said police were called around 10:40 a.m. about a dispute between two women outside an 18th floor flat at a government-built apartment block in the Bedok residential district.

They found the woman's body sprawled at the bottom of the building and took the other woman into custody, he said.

The suspect, whose identity was withheld pending investigation, had scratches on her arms, Keong told AFP, adding that blood was found on the 18th floor.

Keong said the incident had been classified as "unnatural death."

On May 29, Filipina maid Guen Aguilar was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for killing fellow domestic worker Jane La Puebla whose dismembered head and limbs were found in an upmarket Singapore shopping district.

Aguilar, 30, escaped the death penalty after the charge was reduced to culpable homicide not amounting to murder due to her mental state when she committed the crime last September.

About 150,000 women, many from impoverished villages in the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, work as maids in Singapore. *AFP*

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promised to surrender the priest the moment he returned.

On their second visit to the Archbishop's Palace, Dechino said they were met by a Fr. Teng who said he would take Belciña to the police station today.

Based on resolution issued

Belciña was staying at the Spiritual Pastoral Formation Year (SPFY) Center in the palace compound when he was charged with rape last February.

Danao City Prosecutor Jose Dionisio Kyamko, who filed the child abuse charges on June 27, said the complaint was based on the resolution issued by the special investigating panel. Paderanga immediately issued the warrant of arrest.

Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau

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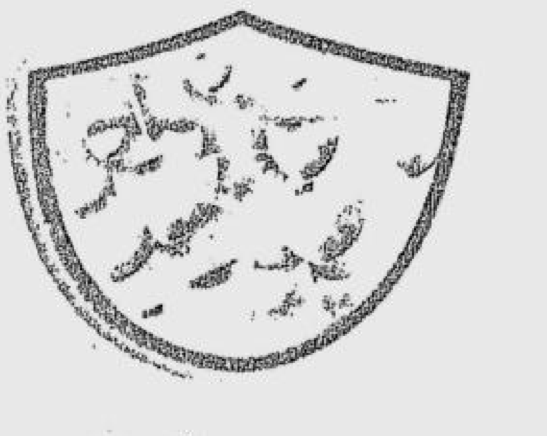

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Blessed

EDITORIAL

WARREN E. BUFFETT, THE WORLD'S SECOND richest person, has given a windfall to charity by donating $37 billion of his $44-billion fortune. The amount represents the single biggest amount given to charity in human history. Buffett has outdone all other American industrialist-philanthropists.

The amount is staggering. It represents the Philippine budget—at around P900 billion in 2005—for two years! To be sure, many Philippine finance and budget officials could only imagine what would have happened had Buffett donated his fortune to Philippines Inc. Goodbye, budget deficit?

Of course, that's quite far-fetched, but if Buffett's money really goes to the needy of the world, then everything will be for the best, including for those who live in the Philippines. Filipino charitable organizations may tap the Buffett funds through their several conduits in order to finance programs for the poor and the needy. Charities working in other developing nations may do likewise. Everyone in the world can benefit from Buffett's generosity.

What is curious is that while some of the money will go to philanthropic foundations run by members of the Buffett family, most of it—$31 billion—will go to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. In short, most of the money will endow a foundation that does not carry Buffett's name. The money is not for Buffet's "memorialization" or canonization. He has done quite a selfless act.

Buffett, of course, is playing it smart and a bit safe. Since the Gates' foundation has had a head start in charity work, Buffett is giving his fortune to an outfit that has a good track record in funding and implementing programs to relieve poverty, boost development and improve education in developing countries. In short, he wants his charity to be managed effectively.

And he has calculated quite well that the Gates' foundation would deliver the goods. After all, Bill Gates has indicated he would hand over the day-to-day affairs of Microsoft to another chief executive in order to concentrate on his foundation. Thus, the world expects that Gates would bring to the foundation the same magical brilliance that he employed to make Microsoft the most dominant IT company in the world and to turn himself into the world's richest man with an estimated $50 billion in fortune.

One may surmise that Buffett is paying a left-handed compliment to Gates by giving his fortune to the latter's philanthropic foundation. If the world's second richest man could give away three-fourths of his fortune to charity, why couldn't the richest man in the world? Buffett's donation looks like an invitation or a challenge for Gates to do the same.

No matter. Gates and Buffett have already given the world a lesson not only in generosity, but also the proper regard for personal and professional success. Both are accomplished and visionary businessmen who have made their mark in their own fields. The fact that their accomplishments easily brought them billions of dollars only show their uncommon vision. Nevertheless, they have not let their billions blind them to the proper regard for material wealth and to the eternal verity that one's fortune is only as good as how one uses it to uplift the lives of others.

Catholic moral and ascetic theology enjoins the faithful to perform spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Such works do not depend on one's station or fortune since even the poor are encouraged to perform works of mercy to others, their fellow needy or even to the rich whose wealth may disguise their spiritual poverty.

Buffett, an old man who has grown in wisdom and maturity, knows he cannot carry his wealth to his grave. He is giving most of it to the world for its betterment and so that his act of mercy could be followed by others and works of mercy will multiply.

"Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy," Christ said in the Sermon on the Mount. Bless you, Warren E. Buffett.

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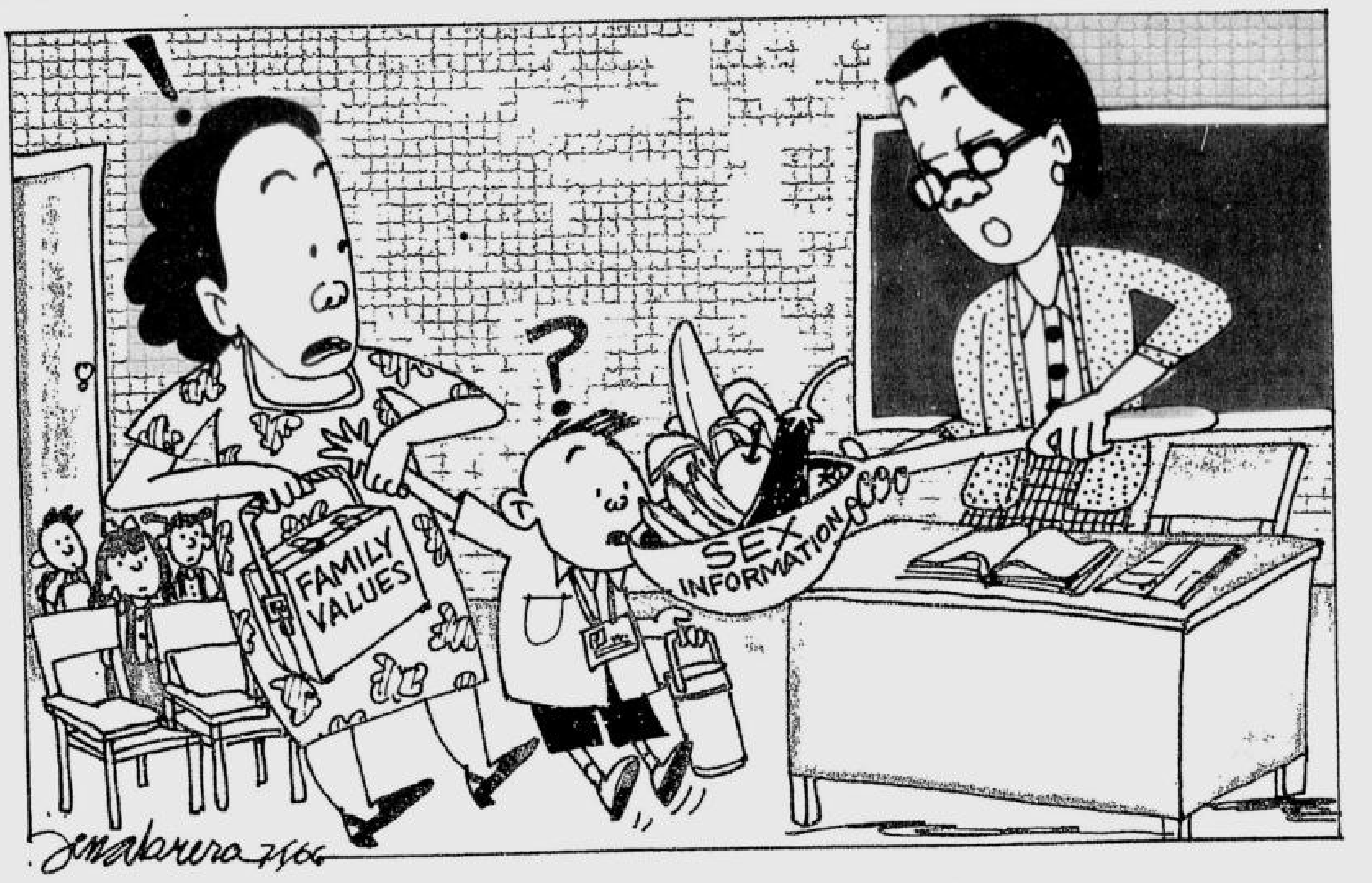

An incompetent Cha-cha

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

LET ME START BY OBSERVING THAT THE Constitution of 1987, for all its many improvements on our past charters, is still weakened by a number of shortcomings that need to be corrected. Justice Laurel, one of the outstanding framers of the Commonwealth Constitution, once said that it was "lacking in perfection and perfectibility." That well-meaning comment is, in my view, equally applicable to the present Constitution, if not more so because of its unusual provenance.

The manner it is sought to be changed is through the Cha-cha, which by its name alone trivializes a solemn democratic function and degrades it to a frivolous dance. The re-examination and change of the supreme law of the land should not be cheapened to a frippery contortion. The re-writing of our paramount law requires the serious attention of the nation and should not be flippantly called the Cha-cha.

Its insolent denomination betrays its disrespect for the Constitution it would violate. The Cha-cha would revise the charter by replacing the entire presidential form of government with a parliamentary system that would uproot the major feature of the present regime. This is the doctrine of separation of powers that makes the three principal departments of the government independent of each other and subject to the corollary principle of checks and balances.

Whatever its merits and defects, the change proposed by the Cha-cha is not an isolated amendment of the Constitution, affecting only a few provisions without touching the rest of the document. An example would be a re-writing of Art. VII, Sec. 4 changing the term of office of the President of the Philippines from six years without re-election to four years with one re-election. This can be made through a mere amendment that would keep the other provisions of the Constitution intact.

The abolition of the presidential system under the present Constitution and its substitution by a parliamentary system cannot be done with similar facility. It will require a massive reorganization of the government, particularly of the legislative and executive departments which will be merged instead of divided as they are now. The major revamp of the Articles on the political departments may also include a modification of Article VIII on the judicial department, making the re-writing of the Constitution a revision and not a mere amendment.

Article XVII of the present Constitution is entitled "Amendments or Revisions" unlike the corresponding articles in the 1935 and 1973 Constitutions which were both entitled the generic "Amendments." The 1987 Constitution makes a distinction between the two kinds of changes and specifies the methods to effect them. Sec. 1 of the present Article says that Congress or a constitutional convention may **amend or revise** the Constitution. Section 2 says that only **amendments** may be made by the people through the initiative.

If Art. XVII had intended the initiative to be also used for revising the Constitution, it would have said so expressly. It did not. Instead, it says that both **amendment and revision** can be made by Congress or a constitutional convention, **omitting mention of the initiative**. Section 2, by contrast, authorizes the initiative to only **amend** the Constitution, **omitting mention of revision.**

Revision would demand more expertise and care, which is why it is required to be done by Congress or a constitutional convention, both of which are collegiate bodies presumed to be more knowledgeable than the random voters participating in the initiative. Since amendment may involve uncomplicated changes only, the citizens in general are permitted to perform it despite their lack of expertise in the art of constitution-making and the organizational cohesiveness of a deliberative body.

Initiative is an untried innovation and is properly not allowed to be undertaken by the relatively untrained if concededly sensible electorate except to only amend but not revise the Constitution. Revision is a more exacting task that should be entrusted to more supposedly capable officials than the ordinary and disorganized voters. It's like the distinction between a brain operation that must be done by an expert surgeon and a mere appendectomy that can be handled by an ordinary doctor.

The other hindrance to the initiative is the lack of an implementing statute as noted by the Supreme Court in Santiago v. Commission on Elections and Pirma v. Commission on Elections. Both cases were decided in 1997, and the omission has not yet been repaired to date. Even if Congress should now pass such a law, it should only apply to an amendment and not a revision of the Constitution as proposed by the Cha-cha.

The dancers of the Cha-cha should abandon their carnival sideshow instead of deceiving the people with pious protestations of their bogus patriotism. Tremendous amounts of public funds are being squandered to support their exorbitant juggernaut that shoulc be better spent to alleviate the hardships o the indigent masses. The Cha-cha is anothe heartless example of the cupidity of public officials who would subordinate the integrity o the Constitution to their selfish persona agenda.

Great talker, poor walker

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

A LITTLE OVER SIX MONTHS AGO, I WROTE in this column: "The proof of the pudding is in the eating. All these assertions that Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez is a person of probity, integrity and competence, all these releases hyping up her role as the 'protector of the people' against the excesses of government officials and employees (including, a much publicized visit to children in prison) tell us that she can talk the talk. But can she, will she, walk the walk?"

The answer to that question has progressively become clearer: She can't, and she won't.

Here are samples of the talk she was talking:

"I will give my best to serve our countrymen well."

"I think people know that I cannot be approached on cases pending before my office. No one can approach me and bribe me. My track record will speak for me that I am always independent and fair."

"The law does not distinguish. The mandate of the ombudsman is to promptly act on cases involving high-ranking officials in government."

"I should decide based on the evidence presented before us."

She also promised to speed up the resolution of cases involving high-ranking officials and to prosecute civil servants regardless of rank and influence should they face a graft case. All these promises she made during a press conference after she was appointed ombudsman.

Since then, however, there is no way she can claim to have acted promptly on the election counting machine case involving, among others, Comelec Chair Ben Abalos, she has delayed acting on evidence that her office has had for over two years now, she has refused to act on recommendations that her deputy and her subordinates have made with respect to the same case. Instead of speeding up the resolution of the case, she has slowed it down almost to a halt. In short, she has not given her countrymen, who deserve reforms in the electoral system, their due. And she has erased whatever track record she ever had for independence and fairness.

Am I being too harsh on her? Not at all.

Just a couple of days ago, after a series of dilatory moves (hiding behind its so-called constitutionally mandated independence and questioning the Court's authority to hold it in contempt) which the Supreme Court repeatedly slapped down with increasing sternness, the Office of the Ombudsman made still another dilatory move. In an "urgent manifestation," it said it could not meet the June 30 deadline set by the Court for determining the criminal liability of the Comelec officials involved in the void and illegal P1.3-billion automated counting machines contract. Why? Because it wanted to avoid the impression that it was being **"rushed into any judgment"** (emphasis mine).

I kid you not. This, after almost two and a half years have elapsed from the time the Court first directed the Office of the Ombudsman to determine such liability. (By the way, Simeon Marcelo, Gutierrez's predecessor, never questioned the Court's directive, and immediately started the investigation.) This, after the Court, in its May 3, 2006 resolution, pointedly reminded the Office of the Ombudsman of the latter's own rules, quoting chapter and verse: "After the termination of the hearing of an administrative case, the investigating officers have 30 day within which to submit a resolution containin their findings and recommendation for the ap proval of the ombudsman. **In criminal com plaints**, on the other hand, they have 10 day **after the investigation** within which to dete mine whether there is sufficient ground to hol the respondent for trial. In other words, the O fice the Ombudsman has only 10 days withi which to determine whether there exists a pı ma facie case against the respondent in a crim nal complaint..

"If the Office of the Ombudsman has indec sat on the case for more than one year and fo months, then it has surely incurred undue d lay in the resolution of the case and failed abide by its constitutional mandate 'to a promptly' on cases filed before it. The Office the Ombudsman certainly cannot promulga rules that it can ignore at its pleasure, to t prejudice of the parties."

As the reader can see, not by any stretch the imagination can the Office of the Ombuc man be perceived by anyone to be "rushing judgment" in this case. But equally obviously does not want to let any facts get in the way its arguments.

How difficult is it to determine if a prima cie (at first sight, before closer inspection) ca exists against these officials, which is what required of the agency? The Comelec paid contractor double the price the latter paid the machines. The Comelec used an exchan rate of P58 to $1 as basis for paying the con tractor, when the rate prevailing at the time was P53 to $1 (increasing the peso cost by about P130 million). Doesn't all this constitute in-your-face evidence of criminal wrongdo ing? And this case has been with the Office of the Ombudsman since 2004.

It seems Gutierrez doesn't even want to start. A great talker, a poor walker. For shame. Move over, Aniano Desierto. The title of "Worst Ombudsman" may be up for grabs.

Church could get hurt

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE GROUP CALLED "ONE VOICE" SAYS IT would advocate Charter change through a constitutional convention, "if Charter change is necessary." Hello, where have these people been? If they are not convinced that change is necessary, they must be the only ones left in this country of that mind. It has become obvious to the people that the political system we have stuck with for the past 60 years has not worked. Now One Voice says, "if change is necessary." The way they are isolating themselves from reality, it's clear that they are a very small minority. As one pundit put it, "Only One Voice *talaga*" versus the more than 10 million people who have signed the people's initiative.

* * *

Significantly, the group has trained its guns on the initiative, seeking to cast it aside and discredit it. This move pits a few dozen signatories, albeit big and well-regarded names, against the millions who favor the initiative, many of them nameless citizens of this republic. It also pits One Voice against the representatives of the people, the 1.7 million-strong elected local government officials under the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines, which spearheaded the gathering of those signatures.

Critics of "Sigaw ng Bayan," including some churchmen, allege that the millions of signatures were gathered under a cloak of ignorance, and that the signatories didn't understand what they were signing. In any mass signature campaign, there's that possibility, but even if one takes away a million ignoramuses, there are still millions who desperately want to change our political system, and they see the people's initiative as the only way to do it, given the intransigence of the Senate.

* * *

Regrettably the fight between the minority and the majority over Charter change is becoming ugly. At a recent forum on the subject, sponsored jointly by the Makati Business Club, Finex and the Management Association of the Philippines, former Ambassador Henrietta de Villa called Charter change advocates "the forces of darkness." Her bitter attack shocked the audience. On the other hand, Archbishop Oscar Cruz of Dagupan has become even more bitter against GMA, while Bishop Deogracias Yñiguez of Caloocan has expressed the hope that the President's meeting with the Pope would bring about "her conversion."

* * *

Sadly, the Catholic Church is today caught in the web of politics. Citizens are asking where the line ought to be drawn on the separation of Church and State. I won't take issue with Yñiguez's participation in the serialized second impeachment campaign, because as a citizen, he also has his political rights. But I agree with the Manila Standard Today editorial that he cannot hide behind the fact that he filed that complaint in his "personal" capacity and not as a member of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. As the newspaper noted, the headlines identified him as bishop. But that's Yñiguez's personal lookout and the Palace should just leave him to explain it to his flock and the Vatican.

* * *

What bothers many sensitive Catholics more is the Church's perceived reactionary stand on Charter change, which could gravely hurt its mission in our Third World setting. (Among the disappointed members of the Church is Dr. Jose V. Abueva, chair of the constitutional consultative commission. Catch him in our dzRH program tomorrow at 9:15 p.m.) The Church is now starting to look like an enemy of progress and a protector of the rotten status quo and the elite, when its mission says it should identify with the poor. For instance, it's difficult to see how eight bishops can defend the argument of One Voice that "We need a strong social reform program now," and yet oppose Charter change. This flies in the face of the reality of perpetual gridlock between the two chambers and the adversarial relationship between the executive and legislature in our current system. The structural defect can be remedied by a shift to a parliamentary system, but this group isn't convinced about its necessity.

* * *

It's been noted in various quarters that many members of One Voice are from the Cory era who pushed for the 1987 Constitution. Apparently, the marching order from Ms Aquino is, don't tinker with my Constitution. Some people have also noted that the CBCP president, Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, is close to Ms Aquino, because he is related to her close associate, Margie Pengson Juico, whose mom is a Lagdameo. Such personal detail is non sequitur. Instead, the Charter-change debate should rise above personal issues, and among the institutions that should examine it dispassionately is the Church. It should go beyond rhetorical arguments like, "what needs to be reformed are the hearts of those in government." But maybe that's right: after 60 years our leaders have not reformed. But isn't this primarily the domain of the Church? Shouldn't it share in the blame, perhaps because of too much politicking?

* * *

Those opposing people's initiative are exhibiting paranoia. Reports say that Sigaw ng Bayan has gathered more than the necessary number of signatures, which is at least 3 percent of the total number of registered voters in every district. That percentage has been reached in all districts except in the opposition bailiwicks of Makati and San Juan where the two mayors' henchmen are reported to have employed all sorts of tactics to thwart the verification process. Reports say that in Makati, the election officer comes to work only once a week, slowing down the verification process. Also, Mayor Jejomar Binay's operatives have allegedly succeeded in inserting the signatures of fake voters into the initiative list and loudly denounced them as spurious. In San Juan, Sigaw volunteers are reportedly being intimidated and some signatories are being asked to withdraw their signatures.

Sex and parents

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

LISTEN TO ONE COUPLE'S STORY.

Their son, about 11 years old, happens to go to a school administered by a conservative Roman Catholic organization. One day, their son's teacher summoned them because other parents had complained that their son had "taught" his classmates the word "sexy."

The couple didn't know whether to laugh out loud or groan in despair. After all, do children still need to be taught the word "sexy" in this day and age? And why blame a young boy for this, when the word is bandied about with wild abandon, and evidence of "sexiness" is all around us, starting with those humongous underwear billboards on Edsa?

But this just goes to show that if some parents are thrown for a loop by the mere mention of the word "sexy," how can we expect them to sit their children down and discuss the details of sex and sexuality frankly and openly?

"Teaching children about sex and relationships is the responsibility of parents," says Cyndy Tan-Jarabata, mother of a teen and a pre-teen and founder/president of Advocates for Youth. "But the problem is that so many parents don't know how to discuss these matters with their children and are quite ignorant about sex themselves."

This is why Advocates for Youth runs "road shows" on adolescent reproductive health among public and private high schools. Teachers are oriented on ways to get young people to open up about sex, while resource persons discuss matters of health, hygiene, relationships and even romance.

From group discussions, says Cyndy, she has gotten the impression that "young people are really uncomfortable about talking about sex with adults, especially their parents but including their teachers and guidance counselors."

* * *

STUDENTS have confided that when they try asking their parents questions about sex, "the immediate reaction of parents is to demand to know why they're curious about such things and if they have been doing things they shouldn't."

Young people, says Cyndy, much prefer to talk about sex with their friends and classmates, in a setting where there are no judgments and suspicions. But the trouble is that it's often a case of the blind leading the blind, to the spread and perpetuation of misconceptions and misinformation. This is why Advocates for Youth feels part of its mandate is to share accurate information with young people and help them make responsible decisions. Then, they also seek to help form "peer advocates," young people who are armed with the right information and can be counted on to lead discussions on sexual matters.

What are young people most curious about? "We get the most questions about masturbation and oral sex," says Cyndy, adding with a laugh that a lot of young people "believe that if you just 'talk dirty' you're already engaging in oral sex."

* * *

BUT judging from a discussion I caught on ANC on the controversy over the teaching guides on reproductive health, spreading misconceptions and misinformation about sex is precisely what the critics want to happen.

A guest at the show, CBCP consultant lawyer Jo Imbong, asked what particular parts of the modules she objected to, read a paragraph that says sex can be a source of pleasure as well as a means of reproduction. I nearly fell off my chair. Does Imbong want the Department of Education to teach young people that sex brings no pleasure whatsoever? And is it the official position of the CBCP that people shouldn't be having sex for the thrill of it? I have no doubt the worthies at the CBCP have no objections to people having sex; they want us to have as many babies as possible, after all. But perhaps they object to us having fun while doing the deed, especially when it won't result in a pregnancy.

Imbong also read another objectionable statement, one that said masturbation is "natural" and won't result in any harm to one's health. Imbong thought this was the height of irresponsibility and immorality. My gosh, are we back to the days of teaching students that masturbation will result in hairy palms, pimples and nervous breakdowns?

C'mon, let's not lie to our children! Masturbation is natural and babies indulge in it the moment they discover the pleasure to be gotten from touching their genitals. It's not as if young people have to be taught it, or encouraged to indulge in it. When students ask, with some anxiety, if masturbation is "normal," Cyndy says their speakers assure them it is. "But we also add that some religions teach that masturbation is immoral and a sin, and that depending on your beliefs, you have to make your own decisions about it."

* * *

ANOTHER critic of sex education has claimed that elementary-level students are asked to bring to school fruits and vegetables shaped like male genitals so they can learn how to put on a condom.

A DepEd official has stated that she has yet to find such "scandalous" material in the modules, but even if it were true, what's wrong with it?

What's wrong about putting condoms on bananas and eggplants? How else are young people to learn how to put on condoms properly? Would the objectors prefer that they practice on their classmates? I'm sure that even if anatomically correct dildos were used, someone would likewise kick up a fuss.

For every 10 students who enter Grade 1, only seven will be able to graduate and move on to high school. For every 10 students entering first year, only six will be able to graduate. What happens to the dropouts? The 43 percent out-of-school youth (more than half of whom are unemployed) are most at risk of mistimed and unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. We must do all we can to reach them and give them information they need before they slip through the cracks and make decisions they will regret for the rest of their lives.

A flat world and a round ball

WORLD VIEW

Joschka Fischer

WITH THE FINAL STAGE OF THE WORLD CUP approaching, now is a good opportunity for a mid-tournament appraisal.

This year's Cup, unlike the previous one in Japan and South Korea in 2002, didn't witness any real upsets in the first round. Switzerland and Australia surprisingly reached the elimination round, and the Asian and African teams disappointed somewhat, with only Ghana advancing. There have been just two ugly matches so far, full of fouls, nasty attacks and unnecessary aggression, as well as numerous yellow and red cards: Italy versus the United States, and Portugal versus the Netherlands. Otherwise, we're experiencing a wonderful Cup in Germany, in terms of both sportsmanship and the overall atmosphere.

As for Germany and the Germans, one hardly recognizes one's own country and people. Even Mother Nature has played along. After a long winter and a non-existent spring, summer started promptly with the first kick-off—and virtually overnight, Germany has flaunted its sunniest and most delightful side. The weather is Mediterranean, and all of a sudden, so are the people.

The Cup's organization has been exceptional (as was to be expected), with excellent police work giving hooligans hardly a chance. The whole of Germany has been celebrating a never-ending party with guests from all over the world (which was not expected). And the German team has put on a wonderful display of heart-warming and modern offensive soccer (which nobody could have expected!).

More importantly, not only in the German team, but also in the country as a whole, a young, cool, laid-back and carefree Germany is raising its head, a Germany that is cosmopolitan, friendly and good-humored. Years of bad news appear to have passed the Germans by without a trace. Doctors are on strike, taxes are on the rise, the parties in government are mauling each other, and Chancellor Angela Merkel herself proclaimed in a speech that the country is in disastrous shape. But the Germans, undaunted by it all, simply keep celebrating one great soccer party with their new-found friends from all over the world.

The black, red and gold German tricolor adorns the entire country as never before, but almost nowhere are there nationalist undertones. In fact, the flags of many nations fly alongside the German flag. In Berlin, as in other large German cities, taxis sport the flags of their drivers' home countries—from Angola to Saudi Arabia. Fans don not just their nations' flags, but also fantastic costumes evocative of their home countries' colors. Flags are flown in hopes of victory, but also serve to dry the tears of defeat.

In short, Germany during the World Cup is reminiscent of a Shakespearean midsummer night's dream, with a touch of Woodstock to boot. Outside the stadiums, public screenings of the games have become joyous mass "happenings."

And how is the soccer? This World Cup demonstrates three main developments that the sport has undergone. First, Europe and South America are more dominant than four years ago and remain the unchallenged great powers of international soccer. So we must hope that the World Cup in South Africa in 2010 will finally bring greater global parity.

Second, international soccer is witnessing the advent of a new generation. Spain, Argentina and Germany, to name but a few countries, have put forward very young teams that have played an impressive game. On the French, English and Portuguese teams, too, it is the young players that have shone—despite the continuing presence of Zidane, Beckham and Figo. Even the Brazilian squad is looking more aggressive and likely to score with young players like Robinho and Juninho than with their aging champions from 2002.

This generational change is accelerated by a third development. At the top international level, soccer has become faster and more athletic, and the top teams can shrink space on the field more effectively. A team that is unable to keep going at full speed for the full 90 (or more) minutes, switch from defense to offense quickly with the whole team, and maintain control of the ball to restrict their opponents' movements won't stand much of a chance.

Here, soccer parallels today's globalized markets, which make similar restructuring of national economies necessary. Unlike economic globalization, however, it remains to be seen whether this new, fast-paced style of soccer will prevail (after all, the young blood of Spain lost to the old boys of France). The sport and its fans will certainly profit if it does.

For now, we have a World Cup filled with soccer that is being shaped by a new, young generation both on and off the playing field—lighthearted, enthralling and beautiful to watch. Let's hope that when the last whistle blows at the finals in Berlin on July 9, Germans will retain as much of this positive spirit as possible. Germany urgently needs this kind of optimism, because, unfortunately, two universal principles will continue to apply in the future: first, the winter will return, and, second, the ball is round, and the next game is always the most difficult. *Project Syndicate/Institute for Human Sciences*

Joschka Fischer, a leader of the Green Party for nearly 20 years, was Germany's foreign minister and vice chancellor from 1998 to 2005.

Second mother

YOUNG BLOOD

John Timojin Tawasil

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

HOW COULD ANYONE HAVE KNOWN THAT FOR THE better part of 23 years, a timid woman from Masbate would be able to make magic?

She floats around the house, singing a tune she has made up, cleaning and washing and wiping along the way. She cuts through our house like a typhoon, but accomplishing the exact opposite by bringing order instead of destruction. When she is done, the house is spic-and-span again.

Ever since I can remember, I could always count on Ate Purs being somewhere near. She is like a fixture in the house, always watching over me. My mother told me she was there before I was born, anticipating my birth. And as I grew up, she became something like my second mother. When I was still a child she played with me if there was nobody else I could play with. She cleaned up after my mess and made the food, toys or whatever I had thrown up on the floor magically disappear.

It never entered my mind that she was a helper hired to take care of me. To me she was Ate Purs, period.

When I was young, the only thing that could lull me to sleep was a warm bottle of milk and the gentle patting of my behind. Ate Purs fought off her own sleepiness to do it every night. When I woke up wanting some milk, she would be up quickly to prepare a bottle. And when I used the toilet as a toddler, she patiently waited for me to finish so that she could clean me up.

She went on a vacation once, and for the first time I was aware that she was not there with me. I felt a little empty and lonely. Whenever she called on the phone, I would cry and tell her that I missed her. And when she came back, I was filled with happiness and everything was right with the world once again. It was the first time I realized she wouldn't always be there.

When I started going to school, she would take me there and fetch me and help me with my projects. These are little things to which any normal kid would not give a second thought. To me then, it was the most natural thing in the world: She was there and the world was OK.

I have sometimes wondered why she hasn't left us. I knew she could, like the many other house help my parents hired to work with her. They either left for abroad or found other jobs. No one stayed for more than a few years—all of them dropping out like prime ministers of a chaotic government. I have never found the answer to my question.

As I grew up, I didn't need to have my butt gently patted or my bottle of milk prepared for me anymore. But still she stayed.

To this day, she still works around the house and keeps it clean and tidy. She does these things day in and day out, with unselfish devotion.

Once I told her that she didn't need to clean my room since it looked fine. She went ahead and cleaned it anyway.

Whenever she goes on vacation, my room quickly falls into disarray, with books, papers and miscellaneous items scattered all around. But when she returns, these things fly back like magic to their places, filed neatly in stacks and rows.

Ate Purs didn't get married. I don't know if she ever fell in love, though I have teased her about this a number times.

She helps support the other members of her family with the salary we pay her. She serves us—no, she gives herself to us—so completely and with so much loyalty and devotion that it approaches something very much like love. And we reciprocate by treating her like a member of the family.

My grandmother told me that such people are hard to find. I agree. To my mind, she is the epitome of the honest, hardworking Filipino striving to have a better life. Whoever thought of us as indolent should take a look at her. She works without thinking of herself, and keeps on looking after the interests of the people she loves. I once joked that if other "servants" (as in public servants) were like her, we would have been a rich country a long time ago.

I have observed other people with their house help, and somehow they look different to me. They treat their house help differently, like servants. *Katulong*.

No, Ate Purs, is not a *katulong*. She is Ate Purs to me and nothing else.

I've made some mistakes and I've hurt her feelings a few times without meaning it. She's made a few mistakes in the past, but we've both forgiven each other, because we're family. I'm proud to say I have two mothers who have given me so much in the two decades I have spent on earth.

In recent months, we have noted that her hearing isn't that good anymore. She also tends to forget instructions and she sometimes misplaces things. She's getting old, and I'm getting old, too. I know that nothing lasts forever, and she may not be with us much longer. But I hope that when I go home, Ate Purs' magic will still be there and all will be right with the world.

John Timojin Tawasil, 22, is a third year student at the UP College of Medicine.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Unethical sharing

"Is it ethical for two senators to sign a written contract to divide a public office between themselves without the participation of other senators?"

—Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago on the term-sharing deal between Senate President Franklin Drilon and Sen. Manny Villar

Nickel

"I feel like a nickel among dimes."

—Sen. Juan Flavier, the "poorest" senator with a net worth of P3.4 million.

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Distorted sense of priorities

I WAS EXPECTING PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo to declare "war" on poverty. But she instead announced the allotment of P1 billion for her anti-insurgency campaign. The Arroyo administration easily finds the money to spend for guns, bullets and other hardware items. But for programs that would provide the poor the means to buy food and other basic needs, it is so stingy.

For instance, last November 2004, the government launched the food for work program. It was supposed to provide P1,200 worth of food vouchers for 50,000 families in five depressed provinces. The total amount of the project for six months was P360 million. But what actually happened? The program was implemented only for one month, with the Department of Social Welfare and Development spending P60 million.

What kind of persons do we have in the present government? The President and her top advisers have no reluctance to splurge on billions pesos just to survive politically and keep the loyalty of the generals but they cannot shell out just P300 million for 50,000 families.

—RAFFY REY HIPOLITO,
policy advocacy officer,
Foodfirst Information & Action Network-Philippines (Fian Philippines),
9B Matulungin St.,
Barangay Central, QC

Parallel importation of drugs an unecessary solution

PLEASE ALLOW US TO CLARIFY some issues in Neal Cruz's column titled "Law to control medicine prices here soon." (PDI, 6/9/06)

The price of medicines is just one of many factors that affect the health condition of our people. More than the price factor, the quality of available medicines is of foremost importance. Many people are lured to buy "cheap" medicines that are in fact fake. These drugs will not cure—and could even worsen—an illness.

To ensure that the medicines we buy are genuine, effective and manufactured from pure ingredients, the government should set up more stringent assaying procedures. The police and our health authorities should go after those who are producing fake medicines. The Bureau of Food and Drugs should more closely monitor the quality of medicine importations and impose sanctions when applicable.

We believe the government should implement a comprehensive health care reform program to include increased LGU budgets for health care, wider health insurance coverage for the poorest of the poor, more rural health centers in far-flung barangays, as well as programs restricting our doctors, nurses and health professionals from working abroad, and enticing more students to take up medicine.

We oppose parallel importation because it promotes counterfeit medicines and infringes on intellectual property rights. Low-priced medicines need not be imported. These are available as generic drugs in all Mercury drugstores throughout the country, sometimes in even lower prices than those imported from India by the Philippine International Trading Center (PITC).

If the government is keen on providing more people with cheap medicines, the PITC should import raw materials and sell these to local manufacturers at minimal margins, or import bulk finished products, process them locally and distribute them through the Botika ng Bayan outlets.

Local and multinational drug providers, most of whom are members of the Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP), seek to protect the industry and the public from fake drugs, which the World Health Organization recognizes as "a global health problem causing death, disability and injury affecting adults and children."

Since 2003, the PHAPCares Foundation has committed to give free essential medicines to thousands of Filipinos through the "Medicine for Indigents" program. This program intends to donate P100 million worth of quality, essential medicines yearly to the DOH for distribution to indigent patients in 72 hospitals nationwide.

—LEO P. WASSMER JR.,
executive vice president/CEO,
Pharmaceutical Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP), Unit 502 One Corporate Plaza Condominium,
845 Pasay Road, Makati City

Columnist is himself in 'personal conflict'

THIS IS TO CORRECT THE FALSITIES in Victor C. Agustin's column titled "When your lawyer is their lawyer." (PDI, 6/26/06)

For the record:

1. Our firm does not represent, and has never represented, the Romualdezes or any of their companies, including Trans Middle East which is involved in the dispute regarding shares of stock in Equitable-PCI Bank.

2. Our firm does not represent, and has never represented conflicting interests. We are committed to our Code of Professional Responsibility, and we act in accordance with the high ethical standards required of lawyers.

3. When reading Agustin's articles against our firm and/or its partners, the public should take caution: Agustin is actually in "personal conflict"; he is involved in a family feud where our firm represents the side opposed to that of Agustin's. Further, we act as the private prosecutor in a criminal case pending against Agustin.

We continue to respect press freedom, even if Agustin has crossed its boundaries many times.

—TROY A. LUNA,
managing partner,
Roco Kapunan Migallos & Luna Law Offices,
16/F Strata 2000 Building,
F. Ortigas Jr. Road,
Ortigas Center, Pasig City

Time for De Quiros to move on to other topics

I CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY Conrado de Quiros keeps on attacking President Macapagal-Arroyo to a point that he sounds like a broken record. His below-the-belt tirades against GMA do not speak well of his credentials and upbringing.

It is clear he hates the President and the words of ridicule that spill on his columns are sour grapes. He should be reminded that he is also living in a glass house where he is hiding tons of skeletons in his closet. How insensitive of him to treat a lady the way he does, as if he is not a Christian. Is there a hidden agenda somewhere?

De Quiros should back off! A gentleman should treat a woman like a lady. But he has been barking up this poor lady for a long time; it's now time that he moved on to other topics. Besides, one is presumed innocent until proven guilty. Up to this time, De Quiros hasn't proven anything.

—FRANCISCO REYES JR.,
Lindaville Subd. Phase 1,
Tagbilaran City, Bohol

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Religious delusions

I AM ALREADY LIVING IN THE United States, but I found the news item "Gov't letting Lafayette rape us some more, says bishops" (PDI, 6/19/06) disturbing. It showed that some of our Church leaders are delusional—they sound as if everything they say and do are correct and mandated by heaven.

Take Bishop Arturo Bastes. After being invited by the government to head the Rapu-Rapu Fact-Finding Commission (RRFFC), he now has nothing good to say about a ruling issued by the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources on the matter.

It is the right of Bishop Bastes, and of any ordinary citizen, to disagree with the DENR. But without any real knowledge on mining and the environment, Bishop Bastes cannot be allowed to throw tantrums in his desire to superimpose his opinion over the scientific findings of the experts whom the DENR assembled to help it come up with the correct ruling.

With all due respect to Bishop Bastes, the days of Padre Damaso are long since over. At the very least, he should respect the constitutional principle of the separation of Church and State. What will he threaten us with next time? Excommunication?

The big mistake probably was that Bishop Bastes, a known anti-mining personality, was appointed to head the RRFFC. Had a more objective person been asked to head the commission, I believe that its report and recommendations would have been very similar to those of the DENR.

The DENR ruling calls for a 30-day test run to ensure that Lafayette adheres to environmentally sound mining practices and that there won't be a repeat of the wastewater spills last year. If Lafayette flunks the test, out it will go. I see no better ruling than that, especially since the effects of the wastewater spills were grossly exaggerated by anti-mining forces.

Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes also whipped in shape the field men of the DENR as he acknowledged some lapses committed by them in monitoring Lafayette's operation.

But as Sen. Edgardo Angara has said on Rapu-Rapu, "all's well that ends well." As long as the environment and mining communities are protected, there should be no reason for Filipinos not to be given the chance to benefit fully from the country's rich mineral resources.

—JENINA BANDY,
jbandy06@aim.com

No need of new laws on billboards

CONGRATULATIONS TO PUBLIC Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane for finally issuing a circular ordering the dismantling and/or transfer of those ugly, giant billboards within 100-meter radius of major roads, national highways and transmission lines.

I recently wrote Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago and Quezon City Councilor Edcel Lagman Jr. to inquire about their legislative proposals regulating the installation of billboards. I was privileged to attend the Senate committee hearing on Santiago's bill as a representative of the Quezon City homeowners and it was there where I heard the DPWH representatives say that the National Building Code does prohibit structures which constitute hazards to life and limb (and morals?); so, even without her bill, the DPWH can dismantle those hazards.

Quezon City has Ordinance No. 171, approved on Nov. 20, 1939 yet, signed by Mayor Tomas Morato. But this has been honored more in the breach than in the observance. Due to my pestering City Hall with my letters, Lagman sent me a copy of his proposed ordinance which, unfortunately, has not yet been acted upon.

Anyway, whether or not those legislations are enacted, God forbid, should a billboard fall on me and I live to tell the tale, I know whom to sue. Who else but Mayor Sonny Belmonte and his city engineer? They issue and renew the licenses every year, and before they do that they have to certify that those ugly giants are safe and sound. Their certification/clearance should include that they do not contribute to the "uglification" of our city.

—CONSUELO D. SISON,
Emilia Imperial Dancel Foundation,
10 Alpha Rd.,
Alpha Village, Quezon City

Burma fooling Asean and UN

INQUIRER COLUMNIST JUAN L. Mercado's column "Greasing skids" (PDI, 6/1/06) hit the nail right on its head. The military junta of Burma slapped the world again on the face when it extended Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest for another year. This extension is not just a "domestic" concern. It raises an international issue—like the arrest and detention of Ninoy Aquino during the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos did—that merits international condemnation.

The world should rail against a state that doesn't recognize human rights. The world should condemn a state that sets aside democracy. The world should not just sit and relax when the peoples of Burma are being murdered, raped, forced to work without pay by a military regime whose copycat we Filipinos fought and ousted in 1986.

Just recently, UN Undersecretary General Ibrahim Gambari visited Suu Kyi and told reporters that there "appears to be a willingness (on the part of the junta) to turn a new page in its relations with the international community." He said that his dialogue with Suu Kyi "could be a way to prepare the ground" for her release. It was the first time Suu Kyi was permitted to see anyone in more than two years. But Gambari misread the junta. He forgot that the military regime usually makes unpredictable and irrational decisions (e.g., the extension of Suu Kyi's detention, the transfer of the seat of government to Pyinama, a jungle in Burma).

No less than UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has appealed to Burmese Gen. Tan Shwe "to do the right thing." But the hard-headed junta has not done any "right thing" for more than four decades. What more can we say? What else can we tell the United Nations, to the UN Security Council and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations? "We told you so!"

We at the Asia Pacific Solidarity Coalition (Apsoc) and Free Burma Coalition-Philippines (FBC-Phils) believe that the most powerful organ of the UN must intervene especially now that Burma has cross-border problems like drugs, HIV and refugees in neighboring countries like Thailand and China. How many more human rights violations must the junta commit before the UN and Asean decide "it's enough"?

Asean continues to defend its policy of constructive engagement and non-interference in the case of Burma. It is as if this policy has done something for the hundreds of women who have been raped in Burma, or for that country's more than 1,300 political prisoners. Mercado said it right: Asean made a tragic mistake in 1977 when it admitted Burma to its ranks in the hope that it could streamline the military regime. After almost a decade, nothing has happened. The junta has simply used the regional grouping as a shield to international criticism, while fooling not just the Asean itself but the entire UN system as well.

—ISAGANI V. ABUNDA II,
advocacy officer,
Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID),
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Anonas Road, Quezon City

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Saturday July 1, 2006

THEY WILL BE THE JUDGES. YOU WILL BE THE JURY.
Philippine Idol
ABANGAN! SA JULY 29!
ABC
Iba Tayo!

ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5	Kid's TV	KNN	Anime Ring Kosho		PBA					Wow Maling Mali		[illegible]		ABCinema		Sabado Movie Greats			
ABS-CBN 2	ETK				Little Big Star		Komiks		Let's Go	Quezon Avenue		TV Patrol World	XXX						
AXN																			
Cartoon Network	Powerpuff Girls	Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	Tom & Jerry Show	Pet Alien/Planet Sketch	Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	Cow & Chicken/ Camp Lazlo		The Simpsons					Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	The Simpsons		Power Rangers Dino Thunder	Gundam Seed		[illegible]
Cinemax			The Nugget			Shadow Of Doubt				Bruce Lee Story				We're No Angels			Far And Away		
CNN		World News		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	World News		World News	World Sport	World News				Talk Asia	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart
Crime/Suspense		Mastermind	Forensic Files	Bones		Psychic Detectives	Body Of Evidence	Crossing Jordan		Law & Order		Bones		E-Ring					
Disney Channel	Lizzie Mcguire	Totally Spies- Double Episodes		Brandy & Mr. Whiskers	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Buzz on Maggie	Phil Of The Future	Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Mr. Bean	America's Funniest Home Video	Kim Possible	Martin Mystery	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN				Major League Baseball Thur						Premier Snooker League '06		Germany Tonight		Major League Baseball Friday					
ETC		Joan Of Arcadia 2		Friends 10	Will & Grace 4	Veronica Mars 2		The O.C 3		Beach Girls		Queer Eye...		Saturday Night Live		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	Tonight Show w/ Jay Leno	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Trading Spouses		Today Show		Dateline		[illegible]		NBC Nightly News	Hollywood One On One	Blowout 2		Inside the Actor's Studio		ER		NBC Nightly News	WSJR
EWTN	Visionaries, Mystics & Stigmatists	Chaplet Of Mercy/ Angelus	Image Of God	Adventures In Odyssey	Rosary With Mother Angelica	Knights Of St. Michael	Catholic Compass		Life Is Worth Living	The World Over Encore		Daily Mass Live		Holy Land Rosary/ Angelus	The Word Was Made Flesh	Voices On Virtue	Backstage	Life on The Rock Encore	
Fox News		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Special Report With Brit Hume		Fox & Friends Saturday						Bulls & Bears	Cavuto On Business	Forbes On Fox	Cashin' In
GMA 7	Startalk				Wish Ko Lang (4:20PM)		Fantastikids (5:20PM)		Pinoy Pop Superstar (6:20PM)		Bitoy's Funniest Videos (7:20 PM)		Kapuso Mo, Jessica Soho (8:20PM)				Hokus Pokus (10:20PM)		Showbiz Stripped (11:35PM)
Hallmark Channel		Empire (3:15PM)																	
HBO			Win A Date With Tad Hamilton!			Necessary Roughness				Back To The Future (7:05 PM)				The Manchurian Candidate				Big Preview Superman Returns	Carnivale 17: Creek, Ok
Hero TV	Mon Colle Knights	Shaider	Mask Rider Ryuki	Gransazers	Shaman King	Bucky the Incredible	Jester The Adventurer	Musumet	The X-Treme Team	Love Hina	Fruits Basket	Lost Universe	Hero TV Theatrixx	Babel II	II OVA	Captain Kuppa	Mon Colle Knights	Shaider	Mask Rider Ryuki
IBC 13		Home Shopping Network		Nations Peacekeeper	Auto Review	Getzmo		Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Global Family Series		Japan Video Topics/ Arnis		Bitag		Pilipinas Sabong Sports			
JackTV	X-Men	JLU	The Batman	Ghost	Filter	Bottomline		Raw				Distraction	Banzai	Last Comic Standing		South Park	South Park	Drawn Together	Crank Yankers
Lifestyle Network	Living Spaces	HGTV Special		Sheila Bridges: Designer Living	Radical Sabbatical	Simply Wine With Andrea Immer	Inside Dish	My Country, My Kitchen	Emeril Live		Iron Chef America		Merge		Style Star	I Do Diaries			
MTV Philippines										Wildboyz			Ultrasound						
MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Bandarito	MYX News	MYX Presents		Take 5	Radio MYX	Top Of The Pops	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Live!		Pinoy MYX Countdown				MYX Backtrax	MYXILCG
National Geographic		Living Edens: Manu- Peru Hidden Rainforest		No Borders: Bus 174				Animals Like Us: Politics		Touch Taiwan: The Pigeon Game		Living Edens: Glacier Bay	Alaska Wild Coast	Escape Tech		Escape Tech		No Borders	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports Alap		Kamao		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)		Youth Voice- Debate		GSIS Member's Hour		Isla Hour On NBN		A.S.K.		Krusada Kontra Krimen	
Nickelodeon	Drake & Josh	Zoey 101	Ned's Declassified School Survival Guide	The Fairly OddParents/ Just For Kicks	Catscratch	Avatar, Legend Of Aang	Danny Phantom	Trollz	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That/ Just For Kicks	Zoey 101	Ned's Declassified School Survival Guide	Dark Oracle	Girls In Love	The Amanda Show	The Brothers Garcia	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
Qtv		Lois And Clark		Kakado Star		Candies		Fans Kita		Ay!!! Robot		Day-Off		Sabado Showdown				Groupee TV	
RPN 9		Global Window		Biyaheng Langit	Global Window	Man & Machine				Blind Justice		CSI Miami		Saturday Night Playhouse					
SBN 21								Sony Music Video		Sony Music Video		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Shepards Voice		SBN Music Video	
Solar Sports					NBA Jam	WTA Berlin '06-SF1: [illegible] Petrova		Vintage NBA: World B. Free		Basketball: San Antonio vs New York				Glory Road: The Story of Philippine Boxing				Phil. Bowling Tour	
Sports Plus		Booz Allen Classic Highlights		French Open '06 Day2 & Day3 rd1 Highlights				World Poker Tour 2				Ultimate Fighting Championship				Buick C'ship Day2			
Star Movies	First Daughter (2:35 PM)				Belly Of The Beast			John Carpenter's Ghosts Of Mars			Dude Where's My Car (7:35 PM)			Charlie's Angels	Legally Blonde 2: Red, White & Blonde (9:40PM)				
Star World		Third Watch/ Love Asia		Miami Vice		Wild Card		Less Than Perfect	The Drew Carey Show	Gillette 2006 Fifa World Cup		TNA Xplosion		World's Most Amazing Videos		Enterprise		The Simpsons	
Studio 23								Sports TV	Survivor Panama Exile Island	Pinoy Big Brother		7th Heaven (8:10 PM)			Studio 23 Present				

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Bush military tribunals illegal, rules US high court

From page A1

cause its structure and procedures violate" the international agreement that covers treatment of prisoners of war, as well as the Uniform Code of Military Justice, Justice John Paul Stevens wrote for the court majority.

Bin Laden's driver

The decision was a legal and political blow for the administration in a case brought by Hamdan, who was Osama bin Laden's driver in Afghanistan. Hamdan, captured in November 2001, is one of about 450 foreign terrorism suspects at the US naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The ruling, handed down on the last day of the court's 2005-06 term, followed the suicides of three Guantanamo prisoners this month and increased calls for Bush to close the prison camp. US treatment of inmates at Guantanamo and in Iraq and Afghanistan has drawn international criticism.

Bush stands by tribunals

But the Bush administration refused to abandon military tribunals for Guantanamo Bay inmates despite the ruling.

Officials also stressed the decision did not mean Guantanamo would quickly shut down.

Bush himself sought to diminish the ruling, saying, "The American people need to know that this ruling, as I understand it, won't cause killers to be put out on the street."

Bush said he would consult with the US Congress to attain authority for military tribunals.

Senate Armed Services Committee members vowed to hold hearings promptly this summer on appropriate procedures. Committee chairman Senator John Warner said he would make the issue a "top priority."

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Arlen Specter introduced legislation to require the government to periodically show to a court that it has sufficient grounds to detain the Guantanamo prisoners. The Pennsylvania Republican said he has scheduled a hearing for July 11.

A Pentagon spokesman reiterated the need for a US facility to hold dangerous captives. Bush spokesperson Tony Snow added: "This will not mean closing down Guantanamo. Nobody gets a 'get out of jail free' card."

'A victory for law'

The Washington Post and The New York Times on Friday hailed the decision as "a victory for law," while the ultraconservative Washington Times condemned it as a dangerous restriction of presidential authority.

The first tribunals were set up June 2004. Officials said Thursday that between 40 and 80 Guantanamo detainees were considered eligible for war crimes trials. Only 14 have been publicly identified and of those, only 10 have been charged, including Hamdan.

The ruling only addressed the military tribunals, not the broader issues of whether "enemy combatants" can be held indefinitely or whether the camp should be closed.

Stevens, at 86 the high court's longest-serving justice and a leading liberal, said the tribunals failed to provide one of the most fundamental protections under US military rules, the right for a defendant to be present at all proceedings.

In a 73-page opinion, he also said there was no reason why Hamdan could not be tried by court-martial, which offers greater protections for defendants than the tribunal.

One of Hamdan's lawyers, Lt. Cmdr. Charles Swift, praised the ruling. "All we wanted was a fair trial," he said outside the Supreme Court.

Human rights groups

Civil liberties and human rights groups were also jubilant.

Amnesty International said it "sends a clear message to President Bush that he cannot act unilaterally to create a system of law from thin air."

Nicholas Howen, secretary-general of the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva, said, "Now is the time for the Bush administration to move ahead swiftly to release all prisoners in Guantanamo."

Stevens said the military tribunals were not authorized by the US Congress. He did not address whether the government can detain Hamdan indefinitely but said the government must "comply with the rule of law" in seeking to try Hamdan and subject him to criminal punishment.

Stevens also wrote the Supreme Court decision two years ago ruling that the Guantanamo prisoners can sue in US courts.

He was joined by justices David Souter, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer and Anthony Kennedy.

The concurring opinion signed by the four justices rejected claims the decision would undermine the "war on terror."

Not a blank check

"The Court's conclusion ultimately rests on a single ground: Congress has not issued the Executive a 'blank check.'"

"Indeed, Congress has denied the President the legislative authority to create military commissions of the kind at issue here."

The court's conservatives—Justices Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito, who was appointed by Bush—dissented.

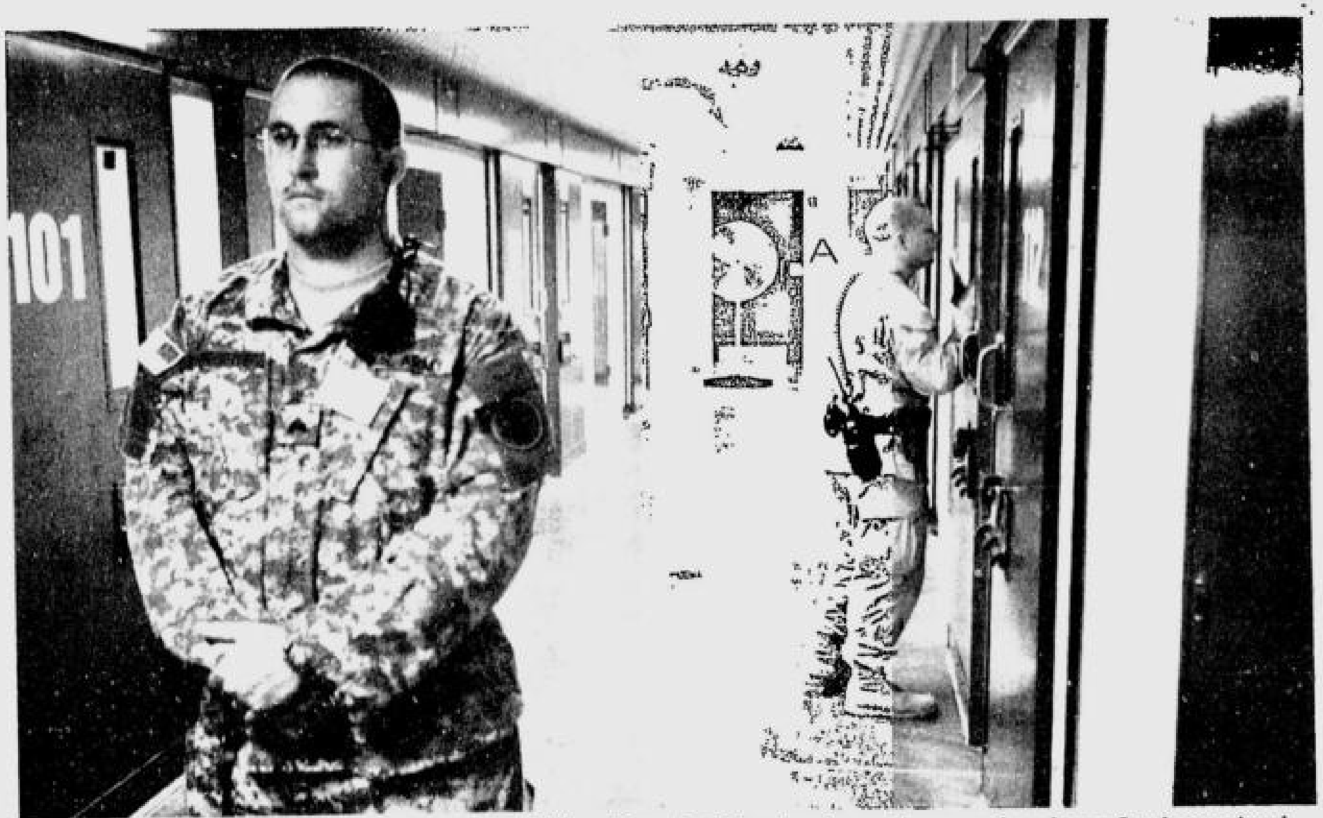
The ninth member of the court, Chief Justice John Roberts, also appointed by Bush, removed himself because he was on the US appeals court panel that ruled for the Bush administration in Hamdan's case.

Deadly enemy

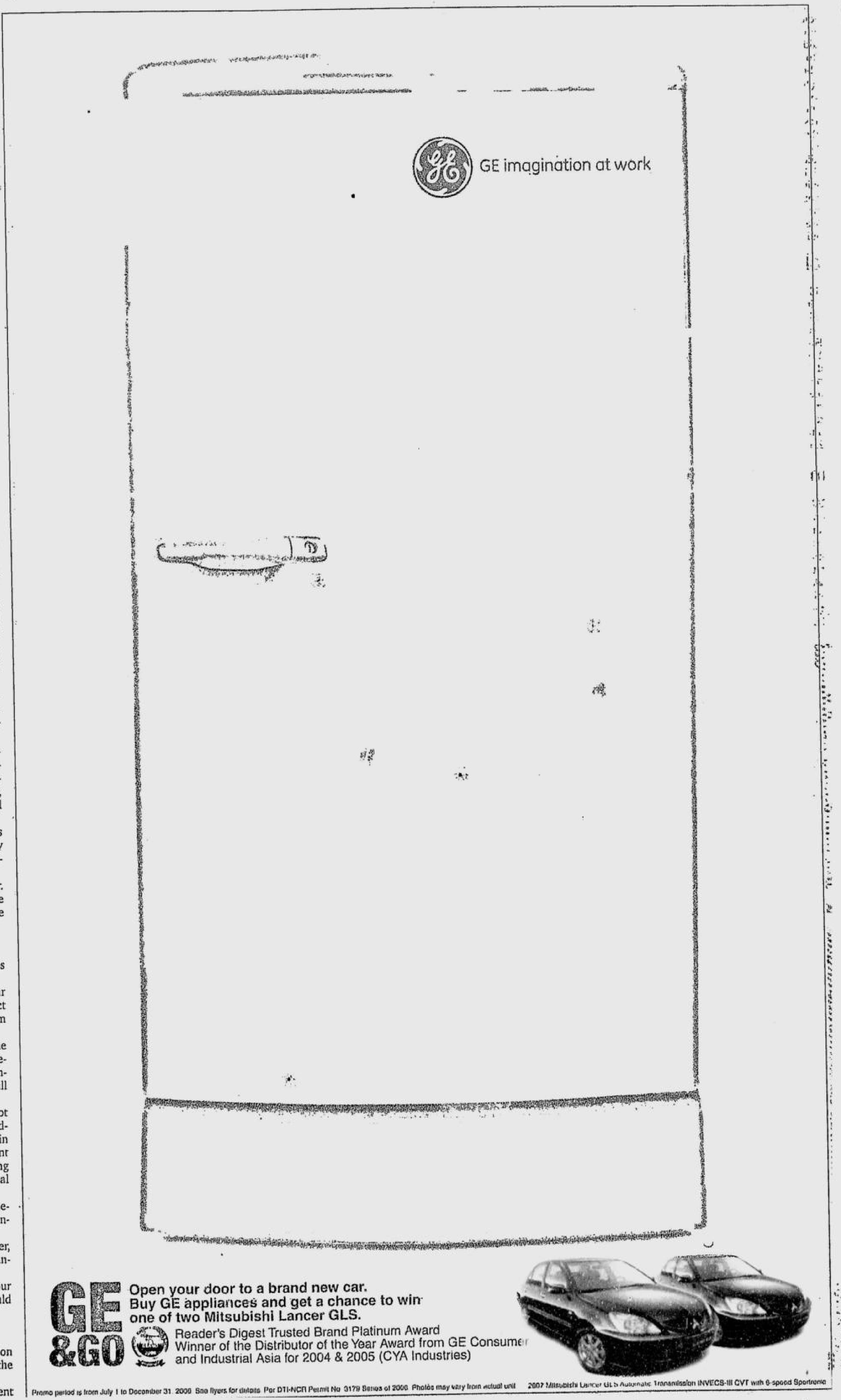
Thomas warned in a dissent that the majority ruling meant that terrorists needed to be caught "red handed" before they could be tried under the laws of war.

"It would sorely hamper the President's ability to confront and defeat a deadly enemy," he wrote.

Reuters, AFP



PRISON SCENE: Guard in Guantanamo Bay US Naval Base in Cuba stands watch as another does a 3-minute visual check of the single prisoner in each cell inside block A of the maximum security prison Camp 5. AP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From colonizers to tourists: DOT lures Spaniards to RP

From page A1

information on diving sites in the Philippines, an archipelago of 7,107 islands.

Not exotic enough?

As Durano explained it, the reason Spaniards do not go to their former colony often is that they find it to be "Western" and not as exotic as, say, China, Thailand or Vietnam.

"Europeans go on cultural tours, we are seen more as Western than Asian ... This is one area where the fact that we have historical ties is not a draw," said.

"We are not exotic from the point of view of Europeans."

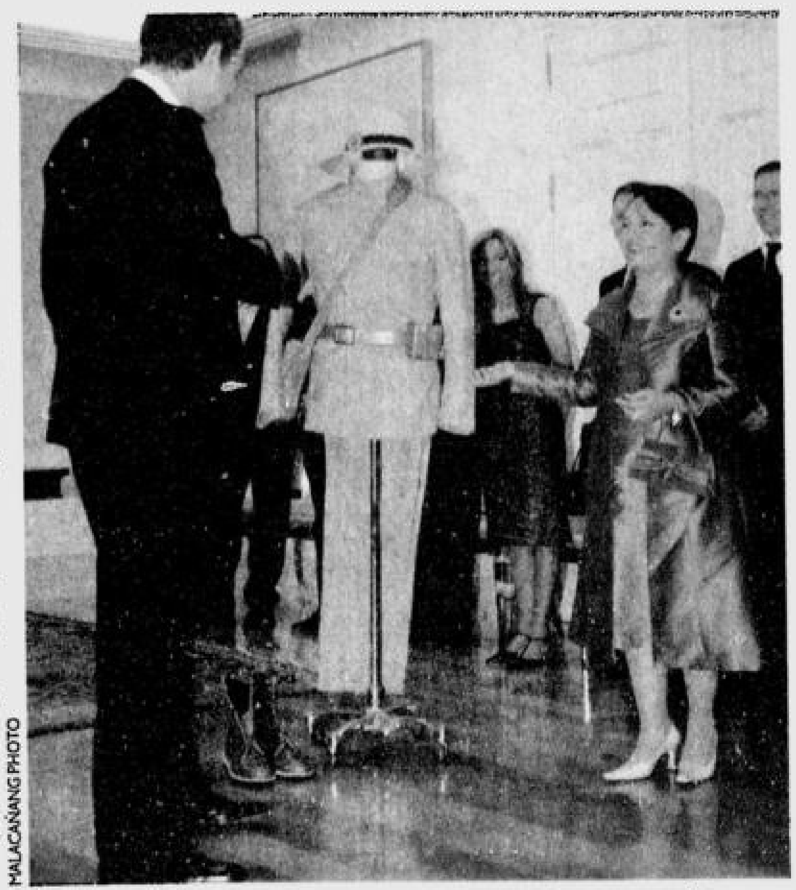
Playing catchup

He said the Philippines had sent many people to Spain to be trained on tourism matters, this country being one of the world's biggest targets of tourist organizers.

"Hopefully, we can catch up," he said of the efforts to snare more Spanish tourists.

Durano said that, on the whole, the number of tourists entering the Philippines had been growing, with the country earning $2.5 billion in "tourism receipts" last year.

He said the DOT intended to increase to five million the number of tourists entering the Philippines annually. Foreign visitors last year totalled about 2.6 million.


MALACAÑANG PHOTO

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo gestures as she is presented by Spanish President Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero the replica of the uniform of the Spanish Guardia Civil Thursday night during the exchange of historical icons at the Palacio de la Moncloa in Madrid.

GMA gets $734-M potential investments from Spain

By Armand N. Nocum

MADRID (VIA PLDT)—PRESIDENT MACApagal-Arroyo has ordered an inventory of all business applications of investors in the Philippines and is set to do away with 22 unnecessary fees collected by various agencies to ease investors' red tape complaint.

In an interview, Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Favila said Ms Arroyo had also decided to make the DTI the sole government agency to deal with investors.

Favila also said the government had so far generated 580 million euros ($734 million) in potential investments during Ms Arroyo's three-day trip to Spain, where he noted an "under-potential of trade between the two countries."

"The President assured them that they will only deal with one government agency, the DTI," Favila said of the outcome of Ms Arroyo's luncheon meeting yesterday with Spanish businessmen associated with the Confederacion Española de Organizaciones Empresariales (CEOE).

He said the businessmen had complained about red tape, poor infrastructure and the bad image of the country abroad, which Favila blamed on negative stories in the media.

He said the President ordered a review of the applications for investments after learning that one businessman who wanted to invest in agriculture had been waiting for a year, with the Department of Justice yet to issue a ruling on a legal question raised by the Department of Agrarian Reform.

Time is of essence

"For businessmen, time is of the essence ... Upon return, the President will require all government agencies to submit an inventory of all investment proposals in their offices, submit (a) status (report) and tell them (the investors) the status so they will know," he said.

He also said the President would also remove fees that were created by government agencies on their own and leave intact those that had been created by law.

"She will remove those fees not made by law as part of the process of lowering the costs of doing business here," he said.

Improving infrastructure

On the matter of infrastructure, he said Ms Arroyo asked the investors to help finance infrastructure because "domestic resources" could not cover the big costs of improving infrastructure.

According to Favila, some of the Spanish businessmen have offered to pump in "investment capital" in the area of infrastructure.

He said Ms Arroyo also ordered that a trade office be put up in Spain.

Favila said business agreements that had already been signed during the trip in Spain were those involving the Bank of Bilbao, which is bringing in 250 million euros for the exploration of gas in Palawan and other projects. (One euro is $1.26 or P67.78).

These investments include 100 million euros for the exploration and the production of oil and gas; 50 million for the development and operation of hotels and resorts; 50 million euros for infrastructure requirements for port operations; and 50 million euros for IT and E-commerce activities.

He said the bank would also pump in 50 million euros for the development of Port Irene in Cagayan.

Footloose solons slow on the draw

From page A1

eryone's information, yesterday's exchange rate was P67.20 to one euro.

"*Medyo mahirap dukutin dahil kanya-kanyang bayad* (It's hard to get money from your wallet if you're paying the bill)," Zubiri said relating how after dinner at an expensive restaurant here, his colleagues took a long time before anyone picked up the tab.

Zubiri who was travelling with his wife Audrey said he had paid for their trip. The couple arrived here from Paris where they attended the wedding of Zubiri's sister.

He said that he joined the official delegation to show his "appreciation" to King Carlos I and the Spanish government for the assistance they had given Mindanao.

Living at the Ritz

As for his colleagues, Zubiri said their expenses would be deducted from their travel allowance which had allotments for trips within their district and other official trips.

Like President Macapagal-Arroyo, Zubiri and other officials, were billeted at the luxurious Ritz Hotel here.

Zubiri stressed that for most of them, it was a working trip—not a sightseeing tour. And each time the officials tried to take some down time, they were haunted by bad luck.

Zubiri and a companion were robbed outside the Vatican in Rome. "Three youngsters robbed me and my companion outside the Vatican. I was able to prevent them from getting my wallet, but my companion lost cash and valuables," he related.

Some members of the delegation were not allowed to see Pope Benedict XVI. Other members did not join the dinner with Spanish King Juan Carlos I and Queen Sofia.

Camarines Sur Gov. Luis Raymund Villafuerte Jr. said he did not travel to Rome to see the Pope, which was contrary to the statement of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

More financial assistance

"Early on, the Vatican had made it clear that only members of the First Family can see the Pope," Villafuerte said, adding that he had met with Spanish tour operators to convince them to invest in his province.

For Samar Gov. Ben Evardone, the trip gave him an opportunity to meet with officials of the Spanish Red Cross to ask them to increase the P10 million they had given for the province's water system projects and electrification.

"We need more financial assistance to put up clean toilets for schools and other areas and a barangay day care center," Evardone said.

North Cotabato Rep. Emmylou J. Talino-Santos said this trip was not something she really wanted, having just come from a European trip with her family.

Last year, Santos had begged off from an official trip to New York, so this time, she could not say no to the President.

"It's not a request, it's an order," Santos said of Ms Arroyo's decision to include her in the delegation, adding that it was the Palace that paid for her trip.

And since she had to accompany the President in all of her official functions, Santos said she was only able to see the sights on her third day here.

Best bets for PNP chief . . .

From page A1

denied that he was pushing for any candidate. He said the National Police Commission, which he concurrently chairs, had always upheld the principle of seniority in making its recommendations.

"The Napolcom will submit to President Macapagal-Arroyo a list [of] the names of officials based on the order of their seniority as part of the basis of her selection on who will be the next PNP chief," Puno said.

Puno was reacting to a report in the Inquirer quoting a top Malacañang official as saying that the interior secretary and Lomibao were engaged in a proxy fight.

According to the source, Puno is pushing for Deputy Director General Oscar Calderon, PNP deputy chief for administration; and Lomibao, for Director Servando Hizon, chief of the PNP directorate for comptrollership, but only of two-star rank.

Puno said the process was purely ministerial on the commission's part.

Two of the three officers being considered to lead the 115,000-strong PNP also said there was neither infighting over the post nor a strain in their relations.

"Hizon remains my best friend, classmate and province mate," said Calderon.

Hizon made a similar statement in a phone interview, saying he and Calderon remained buddies, even "brothers."

The two front-runners for the post are 1973 graduates of the Philippine Military Academy.

The other contender, Deputy Director General Avelino Razon Jr., is the PNP deputy chief for operations. He belongs to PMA Class 1974.

Up to GMA

Puno said he would have a harmonious working relationship with whoever would be named as the next PNP chief.

"It's up to the President to make the final decision on the matter," he said, adding:

"We have an excellent set of officers at the top of the PNP, so any choice that the President makes will be an excellent one."

Sr. Supt. Samuel Pagdilao Jr., PNP spokesperson, said Lomibao had not openly backed anyone as his successor.

"We do not see any visible lobbying of contenders, and we also do not see an overt sign of preference on the part of the PNP chief," Pagdilao said on the phone.

"If ever, that's between him and the President, and that's if he is asked for a recommendation," Pagdilao added.

A source in Camp Crame had earlier told the Inquirer that while an outgoing PNP chief traditionally listed down three likely successors, Lomibao was set to recommend only Hizon to Ms Arroyo.

But Pagdilao quoted Lomibao as clarifying over "Police Hour" on Channel 9 that his out-of-town sorties with Hizon and Director Noe Wong, chief of the Directorate for Logistics, were simply part of the job.

Lomibao has made it a priority to build police stations in the countryside, and Hizon and Wong are directly involved in the projects, Pagdilao said.

In other out-of-town trips, Lomibao had brought along other ranking officers, such as Razon, chief of Task Force Usig, and Director Jesus Versoza, head of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group.

Pagdilao said Lomibao's entourage depended on the purpose of the visit—one set of officers when officiating at a groundbreaking ceremony for a new police station, and another set when following up on an ongoing investigation.

Senior officers

After Lomibao, the most senior officers in the PNP are Calderon, Razon, and Director Isidro La Peña, the second, third and fourth in command, respectively.

A ranking police officer, who asked not to be named because he was not authorized to discuss the matter with the media, said Lomibao's support of Hizon might have strained relations among the PMA classmates.

Two sources, who also requested anonymity for the same reason, said Hizon, Calderon, La Peña and other classmates met at a restaurant in Metro Manila about a month ago.

"It was [only] a get-together, a sort of bonding meeting," said a source.

But the other source said the issue of succession was discussed.

Another ranking officer pointed out that in the PNP, political connections were extremely important as far as landing a good position or getting a promotion was concerned.

He said what was definite was that the next PNP chief would be one who had access to the President and whom she really trusted, "especially at this time of uncertainty."

PMA buddies

Reached on the phone, Calderon described Hizon as his "buddy at the PMA."

He said they were both assigned to Mindanao soon after graduation, "so the bonding is there."

Calderon said he was not taking it against anyone, including his classmates, to aspire to become the next PNP chief. "That's everyone's dream," he said.

Hizon said he was a bit embarrassed that he was being perceived as chasing after the post that Calderon had had an eye on.

"*Ang impresyon, parang sinusulot ko.* But I have no intention of doing that," he told the Inquirer. "We remain friends, classmates even brothers."

Both officers said their only wish was that none among the contenders would go so far as to destroy the others' reputation. They noted that this had happened to other PMA class mates.

Calderon likened the competition to local elections: "You have a list of candidates, but after the election, everybody goes back to work. We will wait for [Ms Arroyo's] announcement. After that, we go back to normal and support the new chief."

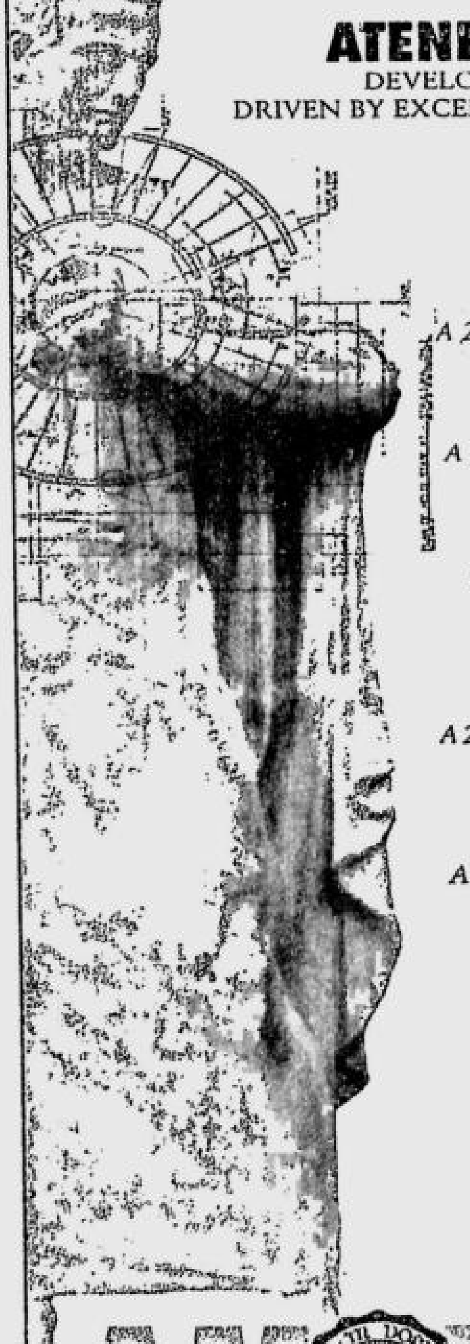
All-out war

Puno has successfully pushed for a more active involvement of the PNP in the Arroyo administration's "all-out" campaign to crush the 37-year-old communist insurgency.

He has announced that P300 million of the P1-billion allocation for the final push against the insurgents had been allotted for the PNP.

Yesterday, Puno said the money would be used in fortifying decrepit police stations in the countryside, with such additions as Special Action Force personnel and defense facilities against rebel attack.

He added that part of the PNP insurgency budget would be used for community projects intended to veer public sympathy from the New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines.



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Semirara cleanup nears completion

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—THE CLEANUP OF THE MASSIVE oil spill off the coast of Semirara Island is nearing completion, six months after thousands of liters of bunker oil contaminated the island, the National Power Corp. (Napocor) said Wednesday.

In a provisional certificate of completion issued to the Napocor dated June 27, the Coast Guard has acknowledged the completion of the cleanup in the 113-hectare area affected by the oil spill.

The final certificate of completion is expected to be issued next month after bioremediation measures are completed, Napocor spokesperson Dennis Gana said in a press conference.

Gana said bioremediation would further minimize the environmental and socioeconomic impact of the oil spill and reduce the recovery time.

Bioremediation measures involve the use of bacteria to break down the oil and turn them into biodegradable materials.

The Napocor and Coast Guard have brought in the privately owned First Response Marine Services Inc. for the completion of the cleaning operations in the affected areas, including coasts and mangroves.

The Coast Guard said that at least 364,120 liters of bunker fuel were spilled near Sitio Bobog, Barangay Semirara when a Napocor power barge ran aground off the shores of Semirara on Dec. 18 last year due to bad weather. The spill is considered the biggest in the country's history.

The Napocor has insisted that only 210,000 liters of bunker fuel were spilled due to the accident.

Clean-up teams have collected 75,000 sacks of contaminated material, of which 68,000 sacks have been transferred to a permanent dump on the island, said Gana. Around 74 drums of bunker fuel have also been collected.

Rehabilitation efforts by the Napocor and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources are expected to commence after the cleanup is completed.

The rehabilitation measures include the establishment of mangrove nurseries, replanting and the setting up of new plantation sites, which have not been affected by the oil spill.

Scientists from the University of the Philippines in the Visayas earlier said in a report that the social and environmental impact of the oil spill would range from a low of P22 million to billions of pesos.

They said the rehabilitation could range from five to 10 years and the pre-oil spill status of the island could not be restored.

The scientists also reported a decline in the fish catch of the residents and an increase in the number of ailments.

But Gana said the ecosystem has "significantly improved and on its way to full recovery."

The Napocor is processing the claim for compensation of at least 150 families affected by the oil spill. The compensation and livelihood assistance to residents is expected to reach P13 million.

WHAT WENT BEFORE

POWER BARGE 106 of the Napocor was being towed on Dec. 18, 2005 by a tugboat from Masbate to Oriental Mindoro when it was battered by strong winds and waves. These caused the barge, which carried 800,000 liters of bunker oil, to run aground 200 meters off the shores of Sitio Bobog, Barangay Semirara. The incident damaged the barge's fuel tanks, according to the Philippine Coast Guard.

The oil spill contaminated about 40 sq km of the waters off Semirara island, killing marine life, and damaged 236 hectares of mangroves, 80 hectares of which were old growth, bordering the island.

Clean-up operations followed, conducted by Coast Guard personnel and 250 residents employed by Napocor, which shouldered the cost of cleanup pegged at about P90 million.

Last February, the Napocor reported that more than 80 percent of Semirara's shoreline and 30 percent of its mangrove areas had been cleared of oil, and that 31,000 sacks out of about 60,000 sacks of contaminated materials had been collected. Coast Guard spokesperson Lt. Commander Joseph Coyme, however, said that even though the surface had been cleaned, about 175,000 cubic meters of soil under the mangroves were still contaminated by fuel. *Cyril L. Bonabente, PDI Research*

DRY SECTION
Leather and fish scales appear to be a match in this market stall in Baguio City.
EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

₱567-M flood control plan set in San Fernando

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE Japan International Cooperation Agency and the Department of Public Works and Highways on Friday presented a P567-million flood control plan for this Pampanga capital to protect its more than 300,000 residents and 5,300 business establishments.

It was also "very important" to save San Fernando because it hosts the offices of regional government agencies and serves as the gateway to the Clark Special Economic Zone in Pampanga and Subic Bay Freeport in Zambales, JICA adviser Shunta Dozono said in a forum that presented the results of a study on the drainage and flooding problems in the city.

The study's summary said 16 of the 35 villages are flood-prone, with water rising up to two meters and lasting from a month to three months during rainy season.

The San Fernando River, its creeks as well as the city's drainage system are now "inadequate" to catch the excess run-off from Angeles City in the north and Mexico town in the east, the study said.

"Likewise, the change in land topography by the (1991) eruption and post-eruption events of Mt. Pinatubo contributes to the said problem," it said.

"In addition, because of lahar and the construction of the tail dike west of the city, the flow of San Fernando River was obstructed, causing floodwater to backflow that aggravates the condition."

The tail dike was an extension of the southern end of the 56-km FVR Megadike in Bacolor town.

More work

The plan entails digging and widening San Fernando roads from the tail dike down to the Matulid Creek. It requires the dredging and expansion of at least four creeks and proposes a floodgate.

Under it, the drainage system would have to be cleared of debris and would have to be linked to where the water heads out.

Elmo Atillano, head of the DPWH study team, said a detailed engineering plan would be made after the city government approved the plan.

At the same forum, marine geologist Dr. Kelvin Rodolfo noted what he called "fatal weaknesses" in the plan.

According to him, the study did not relate the San Fernando flooding situation with that of neighboring Sto. Tomas and Minalin towns, which are seriously flooded on wet months. The floodwaters in those towns flow back to the city, he said.

Sinking

Also, the study did not take into account the rate by which the city's southeastern areas sank. These subsided at an average of 1.5 centimeters per year.

Atillano admitted that while the study mentioned the subsidence problem and warned of its consequence, no detailed study was however done.

City administrator Sonia Soto said the plan would be reviewed and Rodolfo's comments studied further. She said "unnecessary" dislocation of residents was among the activities that should be avoided. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Golden Buddha case revived, but Marcoses refuse to talk

By Delmar Cariño
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

THE REPLICA of the Golden Buddha in the Baguio courtroom. It remains a mystery whether a real Golden Buddha exists.
EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

BAGUIO CITY—THE late President Ferdinand Marcos was charged anew with seizing a Golden Buddha statuette from a treasure hunter here 35 years ago but the lawyer of the Marcos family said such claims were meant to take a dip into the Marcos wealth.

Lawyer Robert Sison, counsel for former First Lady Imelda Marcos and Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos, told the regional trial court here on Thursday that the Golden Buddha controversy had already been settled and that the Marcoses had nothing to do with it.

"The Marcoses do not have any claim or any interest over this statuette," Sison told Judge Fernando Vil Pamintuan, referring to the brass plated Buddha statuette in the court's custody.

Pamintuan revived the Golden Buddha case to finally determine who is entitled to the statuette in the court's custody but was confronted with the same issue that had haunted the court since 1971—whether or not there was a real Golden Buddha.

Invoking the right against self-incrimination, Sison said that the Marcoses would not issue any official comment on the civil case being heard by Pamintuan since they are still facing damage suits in the United States filed by the Golden Buddha Corp.

"Any statement that the Marcoses would say in this case might affect the Marcos cases abroad," he said, adding that the Marcoses are legally not parties to the case here.

Pamintuan earlier issued subpoenas to Imelda and Imee Marcos, Jose Roxas, brothers Henry and Gervic Roxas, Albert Umali and the Office of the Solicitor General to attend Thursday's hearing.

Sison said his clients could not make it because of prior commitments while Jose Roxas, eldest brother of Buddha finder Rogelio Roxas, sent a motion to reset the case because he was sick.

A representative of the OSG failed to appear.

Umali, president of the Treasure Hunters Association of the Philippines (THAPI), said the statuette in the court's custody is fake but his group still wanted the statuette because "it is evidence that a real Buddha existed."

He based his claim on an agreement signed by Rogelio Roxas that the latter had waived the percentage of his rights over the Golden Buddha to THAPI.

"No deal," Umali said when the court asked if he was willing to allow the statuette to go to Henry and Gervic Roxas, sons of Rogelio Roxas.

Rogelio Roxas, a locksmith turned treasure hunter, said military men sent by Marcos seized the real Golden Buddha from his house in Aurora Hill here, five days after he found it in a tunnel near a hospital here in 1971.

The Country Coordinating Mechanism for the Philippines
Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria Projects

Call for Concept Proposals for the Control and Prevention of HIV/AIDS and Malaria

All public and private organizations engaged in or are interested in health care initiatives are invited to submit concept proposals in the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS or Malaria.

Proposals must be consistent with the Global Fund criteria call for proposals for the 6th Round (please refer to website: http://theglobalfund.org/en/apply/call6/), the Department of Health National Objectives for Health, and in keeping with the Millennium Development Goals.

Organizations with a proven record on the treatment of the above diseases and those with experience working with the Department of Health and its local and international partners and with co-funding are preferred. Proposals consistent with all of the above will be incorporated in the country application to be submitted to the Global Fund by the CCM.

Submission requirements:
Concept Proposal (not more than 500 words)
- Background
- Methodology
- Expected output/outcome/impact
- Sustainability

Brief Organizational Profile
Highlights of previous and/or on-going projects

Deadline for submission is on July 7, 2006.
Decision of the CCM would be final and selected groups will be informed after July 14, 2006.

Submit hard copy of concept proposal to:

The Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) Secretariat
Infectious Disease Office
National Center for Disease Prevention and Control
Department of Health
Building 13, 3rd flr, San Lazaro Compound
Manila

Or Email to: ccmsecretariatphil@yahoo.com
Telefax: (632) 711-68-08, 743-8301 local 2350, 2352

Contact Persons: Ms. Agnes Del Rosario and/or Dr. Ma. Cristina Galang

Palparan men use health center as base

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—ARMY troops under Maj. Gen Jovito Palparan have converted a health center into a detachment in Lubao, Pampanga, setting that up beside a barangay hall used as a day care center, the party-list group Bayan Muna reported on Friday.

Roberto de Castro, Bayan Muna deputy secretary general, said the soldiers deployed in Barangay San Vicente worked in full battle gear.

"Young students and civilians are being terrorized by the mere presence of unwanted military elements," De Castro said, citing reports from villagers. He said at least 41 children are studying at the day care center.

This could not be immediately confirmed with Mayor Dennis Pineda.

According to De Castro, the presence of soldiers there, their use of a public facility and the proximity of the detachment to the day care center were "clear violations of human rights."

"The young children are exposed to war materials," De Castro said.

Lt. John Paul Billanes, leader of the 10-member squad in the village, said they only use the health center as sleeping quarters at night.

"We don't stay there during the day. We go around the village," Billanes said in a phone interview.

Lt. Col. Felipe Anotado, commander of the 24th Infantry Battalion, told the INQUIRER that the presence of his troops and their activities in San Vicente have been coordinated with Pineda and barangay officials before they started operations there on June 21.

Anotado said the military has to be in the village to flush out rebels from the New People's Army and its breakaway group, the Rebolusyonaryo Hukbong Bayan.

De Castro said the military's putting up of 61 detachments in Pampanga and Bulacan and dozens more in Tarlac and Nueva Ecija have turned the region into a "garrison."

In Bulacan, two volunteers of the Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Bulacan (AMB) and one of its members remained missing five days since they were seized by six soldiers on June 26 in Barangay San Miguel, Hagonoy town.

Fr. Rolando de Leon, chair of the Alyansa ng Mamamayan para sa Pantaong Karapatan (AMPK), identified them as Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño, both former students of the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, and AMB member Manuel Merino. The three were conducting research in the area, De Leon said.

Two persons taken by soldiers on June 28, Alberto Ramirez and his mother, Emy, who were released also that night, reported seeing Merino alive at the Iba detachment of the Army's 71st Infantry Battalion in Hagonoy, it was learned.

De Leon said AMPK members went to the detachment on Wednesday but were barred by soldiers from entering the area.

The younger Ramirez, a member of the barangay human rights action center, said soldiers took his mobile phone.

Lt. Col. Rogelio Boac, the military's Task Force Malolos head, said he has no information on the whereabouts of the missing volunteers. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

TOTAL WAR

EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Total war is not a new phrase for villages and hamlets in the Cordillera, particularly Cabugao town in Apayao, which is near Kalinga's Marag Valley, site of numerous bloody encounters between government soldiers and communist rebels. This tank is just a common sight for these Apayao children.

Illegal recruiters using travel agencies as fronts

BAGUIO CITY—ILLEGAL RECRUITMENT syndicates here have been using travel agencies as fronts for their operations, but the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration and the local police believe they have started to break open these networks.

Police cracked down on Global Need Consultancy Management Services on Thursday and arrested its employee, Roliza Bantag, 23, based on the complaints of 73 job applicants, said Senior Supt. Isagani Nerez, city police director.

Delfina Camarillo, POEA Cordillera director, said Global is the third travel service firm to fall in Baguio since January, confirming a trend that has directed POEA's attention to other travel agencies.

POEA and the police have also helped prosecute two other travel agencies for issuing documents to clients for possible jobs in Australia.

Camarillo said POEA has been monitoring another travel agency in the city.

She said the vast network of travel agencies in Baguio has become opportunities for recruitment fraud, when countries began relaxing restrictions for tourists seeking short-term entry visas.

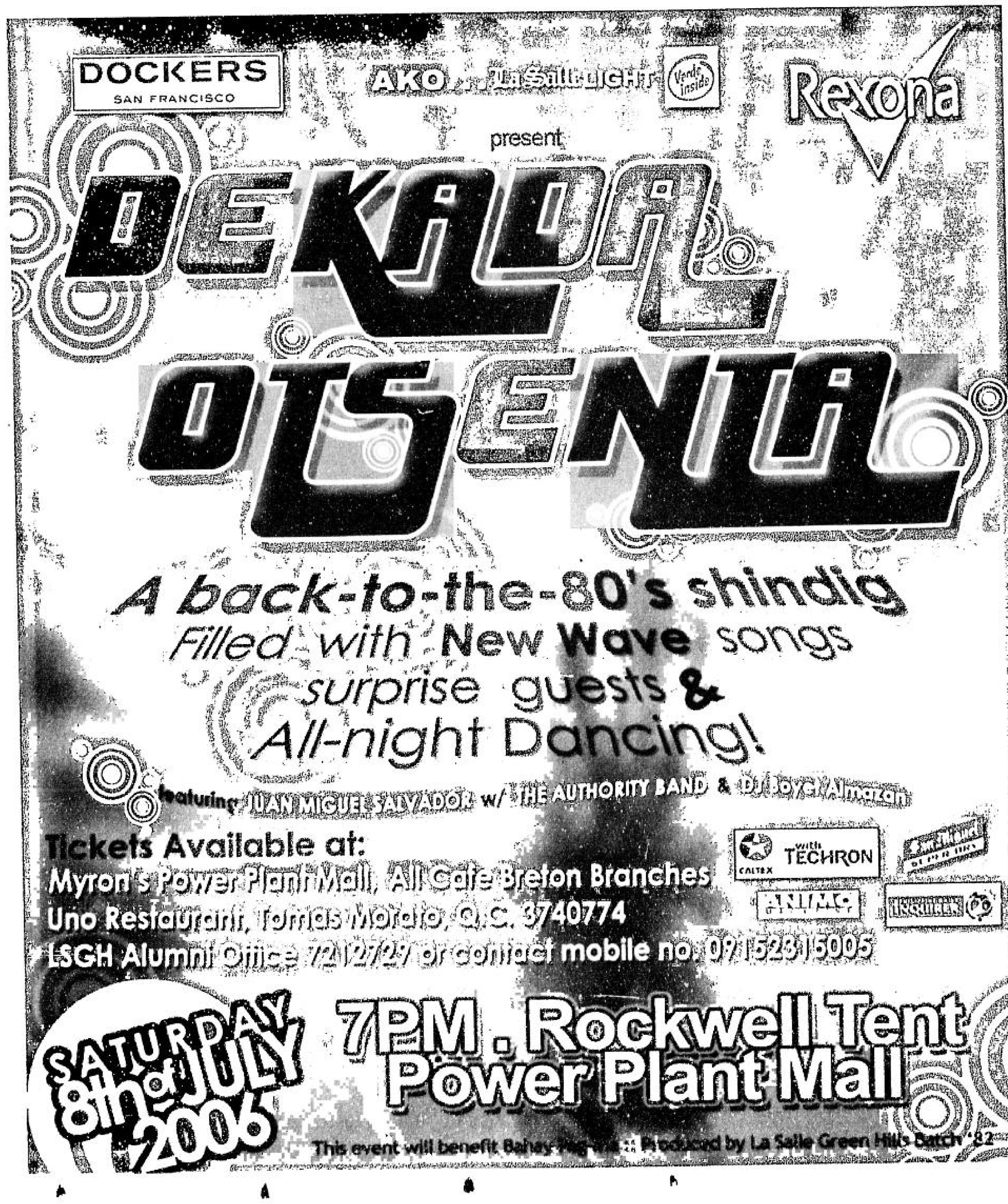
Australia, for example, does not offer work visas so the only access Filipinos have to Australian jobs are tourist visas, Camarillo told reporters here on Friday.

Global's complainants told POEA they were taken to Cubao, Quezon City, and kept in a safe house to await a scheduled interview by the Australian Embassy. But they eventually realized they had been abandoned, Camarillo said.

Richard Osay, a security guard based in La Trinidad, Benguet, told police that he paid Global P35,000 for a job in Sydney but he never got back his travel papers.

The complainants brought Bantag to the police for questioning, claiming she received most of their payments.

Global's employees were clearing out the office when POEA and the police raided it, Camarillo said. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*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Lawyers fear fallout in judges' feud

BAGUIO CITY—A RECONCILIATION IS NOT AT all impossible, said one of four judges here penalized by the Supreme Court for irregularities that another judge had made public in 2002.

Judge Antonio Reyes said he never implied that the feud between the penalized judges and their accuser, Judge Ruben Ayson, "would never end."

A Supreme Court fined Reyes P30,000 for receiving favors from one of the participants in a case he was hearing. Reyes is appealing this ruling.

"This is about one man who refused to join our meetings [every Wednesday, the day of camaraderie they reserved each week]," Reyes said, referring to Ayson, who implicated all six judges in court irregularities by injecting the accusations in an executive order for a different case he was handling.

The order became public when it was circulated among lawyers.

Reyes' declaration that reconciliation might still take place was good news for some lawyers, who chose sides in the judges' investigation, the INQUIRER learned.

Effects

Many lawyers identified with Ayson and the other judges told the INQUIRER that ongoing trials of their cases were imperiled by the high court ruling. They asked that their identities be not revealed because discussing their cases might affect their clients.

"They have become vindictive, and I think there is some unfairness involved in the [SC] decision because they got the wrong judge. [RTC Judge Clarence] Villanueva was dismissed for immorality because he fell in love. Judges with bigger anomalies [involving money] were simply fined. That's a slap on their wrist," said a lawyer close to Ayson.

"I have cases now pending before one of the [punished] judges and this judge already warned my client he will not hear the case if I remain [my client's] counsel," the lawyer said.

At least three more lawyers identified with Ayson made the same claims on Thursday.

Ayson is also being accused of impartiality. One of the lawyers, who testified against Ayson, claimed that the judge had been harassing his clients.

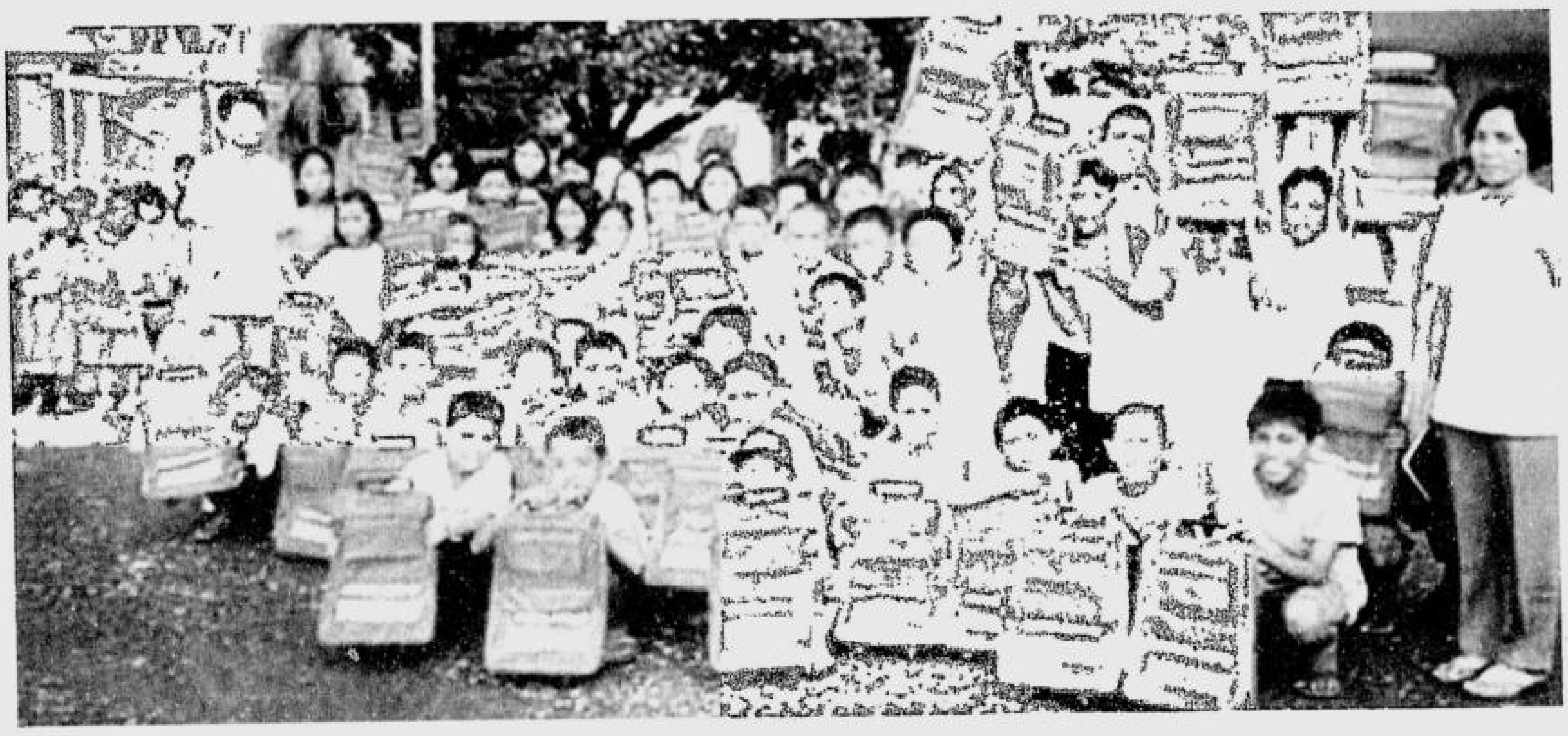
Many of these lawyers resumed work on Thursday when most of the courtrooms reopened, after a lull on Wednesday when news of the judges' punishment came out.

But Reyes said these fears were misplaced. He said the Supreme Court decision should put to rest all grudges so the Justice Hall's operations could proceed smoothly. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

INQUIRER *Visayas*
E-mail: inq_cebu@inquirer.com.ph
Editor **Jun Bandayrel**
Bureau Chief **Edralyn L. Benedicto**

Why Tagbilaran public school kids get free uniforms, school supplies

By Chito A. Fuentes
Tagbilaran City



SCHOOL children (right) in Booy Elementary School pose with their teachers after receiving the free school bags donated by Manila Mayor Lito Atienza last school year. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE your heart is. this sums up the rationale behind the support poured into the elementary education program by the city government of Tagbilaran in Bohol.

"It's a matter of priority. We merely channeled our meager resources into the education of our children because it is our priority," Mayor Dan Lim explained.

The children, specifically those enrolled in the public schools, are getting the kind of support that makes them the envy not only of their peers in the 47 towns of the island-province but also in other parts of the country.

Last school year, the city government provided free uniforms, shoes, bags, notebooks, paper, pencils and crayons to all 8,982 children enrolled in 16 elementary schools in 15 barangays.

City budget officer Rosemarie Palma said P8.7 million was spent for the uniforms and school supplies last year.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza also donated 9,000 school bags to ease the load off the city government at the start of school year 2005-06.

This year, the city government has allocated P8.6 million for the total package. Palma explained that the reduction was due to savings in the purchase of school supplies.

"This year, we bought paper, ballpens and pencils directly from the Department of Budget and Management where the prices are lower," she explained.

No classroom shortage

Unlike other schools in the country, there is no shortage of classrooms in Tagbilaran, declared Dr. Elpidio Jala, the city division superintendent of the Department of Education.

Tagbilaran, however, is more of an exception in a time when pupils are holding classes under trees in remote areas.

Jala said that Lim, in fact, made sure that each of the 272 instructional rooms were equipped with two ceiling fans. The city government spent a little more than P1 million for the project.

"It's the least that we can do to make the rooms conducive to learning," Lim explained.

Although he could not give the exact number, Jala said many classrooms had been built with comfort rooms for the children's convenience.

Lim's administration also assumed payment of electricity and water bills of all public elementary and high schools in the city. (Before Lim took over, parents were made to contribute for the bills.) Palma said the city paid P245,269.39 in water bills and P464,969.83 in power charges.

The mayor also announced that he would not allow any teacher or principal to collect contributions of any kind. "If there is any legitimate need, tell us about it," he told the school officials.

Lim said he had adopted a "one-strike" policy on any violation of this order. "The moment a complaint is received (about any contributions collected), it will be investigated and if found guilty, the offending party will be reassigned outside the city."

Learning from lessons last year when the freebies were distributed only on the first week of July, the city government made sure that, this time, the goods were released early.

Just two weeks into the school year, the DepEd division office has started distributing the school bags and supplies.

Increased enrollment

Popular acceptance did not take long. This year, the city has 348 new enrollees, which, according to Jala, "is opposite that which is happening in most divisions in the country."

This is a result of the free uniforms and supplies given to the students in the city and the mayor's ban on contributions from parents, Jala said.

"In fact, some teachers have been asking whether they would accept enrollees from neighboring towns like Dauis, Baclayon and Maribojoc," he said.

As of now, there have not been any restrictions to that move. In most cases, parents of transferees, who are working in the city, find it convenient for them to tag their children along to and from their houses, Jala noted.

The Tagbilaran experience is slowly gaining attention from other DepEd divisions. Barely three years after it was created, the city division has hosted regional and even a national conference of superintendents.

Although there were other reasons for the choice of venue, Jala said the public school educators wanted to observe the activities for themselves so they could persuade their local governments to give the same kind of support to public school education.

Thank you

The mayor's office has lost count of the number of thank-you cards sent by appreciative teachers and their pupils.

Virtually all local chapters of Parents-Teachers Associations have passed resolutions of gratitude to Lim and the city government. Pupils in different homerooms have sent handwritten cards to the mayor.

In a survey conducted by the Holy Name University on March 11-26, 91 percent of the 150 respondents said they were aware of the city government's initiative to provide free uniform and supplies to public elementary pupils.

Lim received a 75-percent approval rating, an increase from the 71 percent he received the previous year.

The mayor was quick to share the credit with Vice Mayor Nuevas Tirol-Montes and the city council. "This is not a one-man show. It is the city government at work."

Although Lim is a minority mayor (only one of the 12 councilors won from his slate), the council led by Montes had been very supportive of the program, he said.

He credited Tirol-Montes and the councilors for casting aside political differences by supporting the program unconditionally.

Lim, however, cautioned against complacency, saying a lot of work still had to be done.

"We are merely scratching the surface. What we are doing right now is simply to encourage the children to go to school and to reassure their parents that the city government is doing its part to relieve them of the expenses for the basic educational needs," he said.

Quality

What he wants to see next is marked improvements in the quality of education. "The support of the city government should be reciprocated by concrete improvements in the performance of both teachers and pupils," he stressed.

Teachers should monitor the bottom 20 percent of every class and determine the causes of dismal performance, Lim said.

"The city government helps a lot in terms of financial aspects but not in the quality of education which we parents are expecting," conceded Jay Barillo, president of the Tagbilaran Confederated Parents-Teachers Association.

It will take years before the investments poured into the city's public school system will bear fruit, but Lim said time should not go to waste. "If we want our children to be competitive in their time, we have to equip them now," he said.

More than infrastructure projects, it is people who should benefit from the meager resources available, Lim said. Tagbilaran, which became a charter city on July 1, 1966, is a second-class city with a population of 89,000 as of the last census in 2003 scattered in an area of only 3,270.19 hectares. (A second-class city has an average annual income of P155 million to P250 million over the past three years.)

Lim said he was giving more focus on children who would take over in time. "It is not just about showing them that we care. More than anything, it is giving them hope," he said.

There is no big deal about the program, Lim said, because it could be duplicated by any local government unit that truly cared for its children.

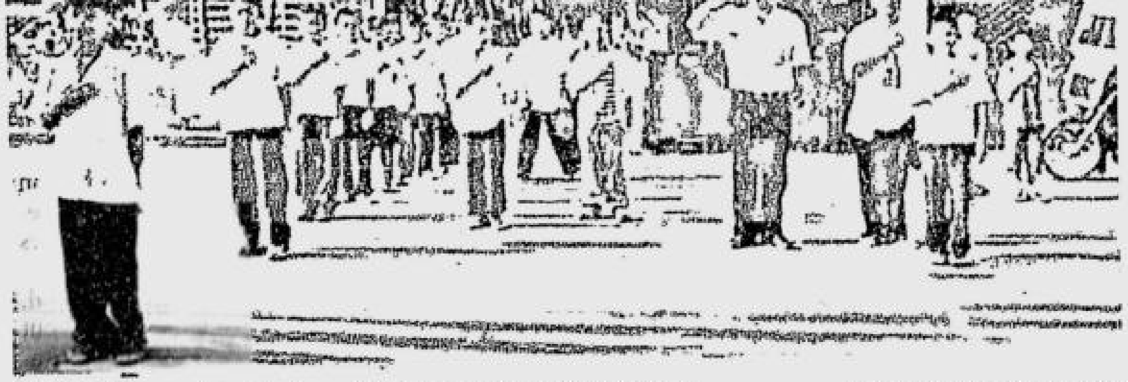
"We just utilized our budget for the special education fund for this project," he added.

Indeed, it is interesting how the fund worth P16.4 million from a city with an annual budget this year of P278 million can go a long way in touching the lives of the children and their families.

Unless the government provides the right learning atmosphere, Lim said children in public elementary schools would not have the drive to make it past high school. That would give them little chances to compete for the handful of jobs available.

"A child's future is only as good as the opportunities he gets today," he said.

SCHOOL children (below) line up for the flag raising ceremonies at the Cogon Elementary School, the city's most populated elementary school. NILO SAPONG, PDI VISAYAS BUREAU



SCHOOL boys salute the flag at the Cogon Elementary School. NILO P. SAPONG, PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

Kagawaran ng Ugnayang Panlabas
Department of Foreign Affairs

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Government of the Philippines, through its Bids and Awards Committee for Properties in the United States of America (BAC-US), invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following:

A. Sale of a 444.44 sq.m. vacant lot located at 620 Terry Avenue, corner Cherry Street, Seattle, WA, U.S.A.
B. Sales of a 440 sq.m. lot, with building, located at 2728 W. Glen Haven, Houston, TX, U.S.A.
C. Consultancy Service for the development of 2,720 sq. ft. lot, with building, located at 1617 Massachusetts Avenue, Washington D.C., U.S.A.

The Terms of Reference (TOR) for these projects, may be obtained from the following offices, upon submission of a Letter of Intent, namely:

PROJECT	Contact Office	Remarks
All Projects	BAC Secretariat Department of Foreign Affairs, 2330 Roxas Boulevard, Pasay Philippines 1300. Tel. No.:+63-2-8343264 Email bfsa@dfa.gov.ph	US$200 purchase cost for TOR relating to consultancy service
Sale of Seattle Property	Philippine Consulate General, 447 Sutter Street, 6/F Philippine Center Building, San Francisco, CA 94108	Submission of Bids: 17 to 28 July 2006 Opening of Bids: 7 August 2006
Sale of Houston Property	Philippine Consulate General, 3600 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 500, Los Angeles, CA 90010	Submission of Bids: 17 to 28 July 2006 Opening of Bids: 7 August 2006
Consultancy Service for Washington DC Property	Embassy of the Philippines 1600 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington DC, 20036	US$ 200 purchase cost to obtain TOR. Submission of Bids: 17 to 28 July 2006 Opening of Bids: 8 August 2006

The sale and selection shall be done through public bidding. R.A. No. 9184 and its implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) shall govern the selection of the Consultant. The opening and evaluation of the bids shall take place in Manila, Philippines.

The Government of the Philippines assumes no responsibility to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid. The Government of the Philippines reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive any defect or informality therein or minor deviation, which does not affect the substance and validity of the proposal.

(Sgd.) FRANKLIN M. EBDALIN
Undersecretary and Chairman, BAC-US

(PDI – June 24 & July 1, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
City of Olongapo
- oOo -
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
General Services Office, 2/F City Hall Complex
Tel. / Fax No. 047-222-2699
Web: www.olongapocity.gov.ph
Email. Olongapo@piol.net

28 June 2006

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The City Government of Olongapo, through the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites suppliers/ manufacturers / distributors / contractors to apply for the eligibility and to bid for the hereunder projects

	Qty/No. of Items	Approved Budget
A. Procurement of Various Hospital Equipment		
1. Laparascopic TV Camera and Video System	1	P 990,000.00
2. Electrocautery Machine w/ Monopolar and Bipolar Modes	2	1,000,000.00
3 Choledochofiberscope	1	1,250,000.00
4. Electrohydraulic Lithotripsy Machine	1	1,580,000.00
5. Video Telescope 10mm 30 Degrees (endoeye)	1	1,250,000.00
6 Resectoscope with Cystoscope	1	970,550.00
7. Flexible Uretoroscope Set (rigid)	1	428,000.00
8. UES-40 Electrocautery Machine for TUR in Saline	1	1,200,000.00
9 Anesthesia Machine	1	2,000,000.00
10. Trocar and Hand Instrument for Lap	1	875,000.00
11. Infant Incubator "Isolette"	1	700,000.00
12. Autoclave Machine	1	6,000,000.00
13. Operating Table	2	3,000,000.00
14. EGD Machine	1	1,200,000.00
15. Dermatone (Pneumatic Type)	1	1,020,000.00
16. Operating Microscope	1	870,000.00
B. Procurement of Various Surgical Instruments (one lot)	10	5,882,742.00
C. Procurement of Various Operating Room Lights (one lot)	4	2,205,000.00
D. Procurement of CT Scan	1	33,600,000.00
E. Procurement of Mobile X-Ray Machine	1	2,750,000.00

Contract No. OC – 75 to 94 – JLGMH – 008 to 027 – 06
Location James L. Gordon Memorial Hospital
Source of Funding Development Bank of the Philippines Loan Financing

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check / Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to the Eligibility Statement and Screening Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR)

COMPLETE SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

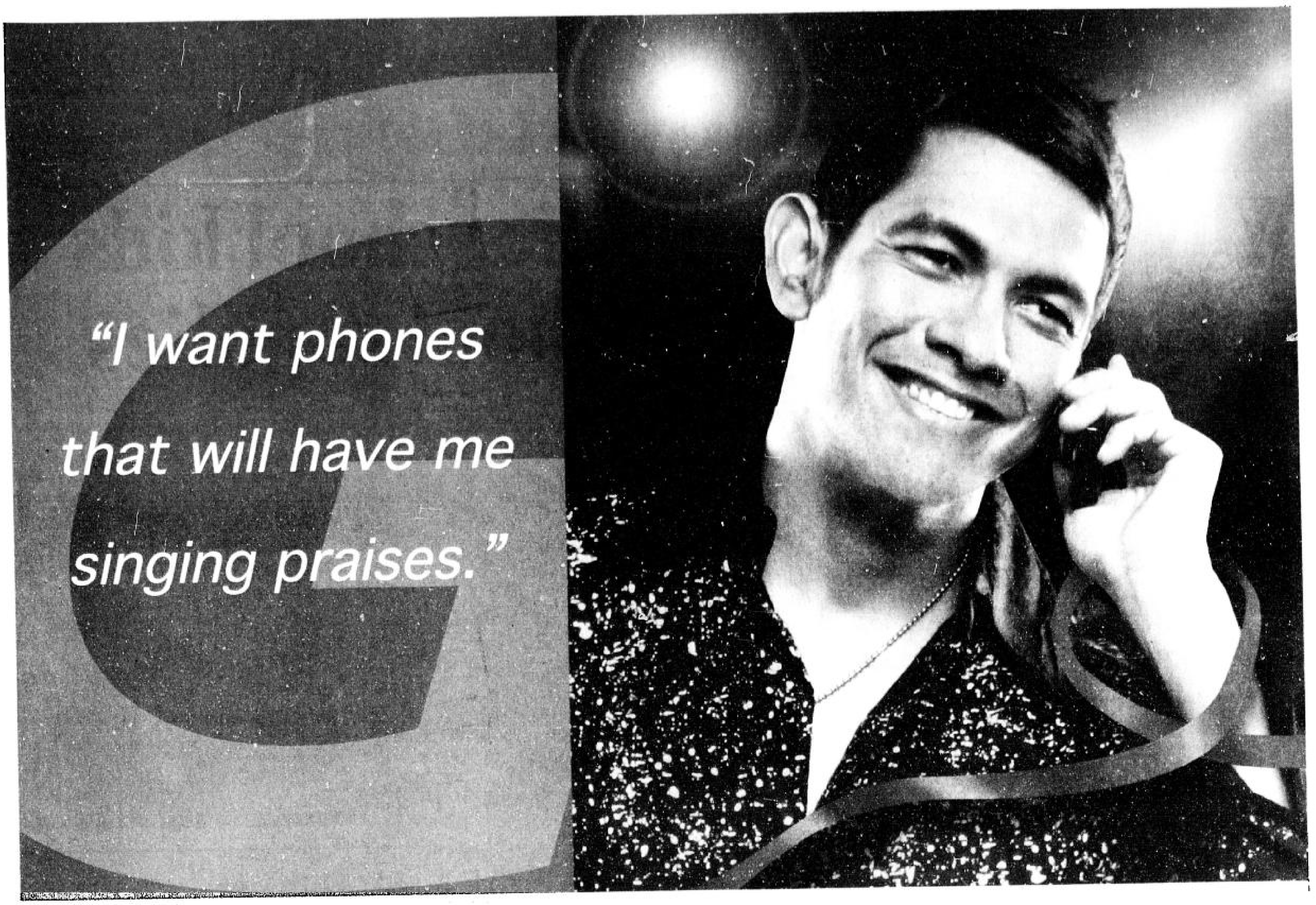
DATE	ACTIVITIES	VENUE
June 29 to July 12, 2006	Posted at GEPS Website & Conspicuous Places/ Newspaper of Nationwide Circulation	
July 13 to July 19, 2006	Issuance of Bid Documents upon payment of non-refundable bid form fee as per approved schedule of bid document fees (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) from the BAC Secretariat	BAC Secretariat 2/F Gen. Services Office, Olongapo City Hall
July 20, 2006	Pre-Bidding Conference at 3:00 p.m.	
August 3, 2006	Opening of Bids at 11:00 a.m.	
Aug 4 to Aug 11, 2006	Bid Evaluation and Post Qualification	
Aug 14, 2006	Notice of Awards	

The BAC reserves the right to accept and reject any bid and to cancel all bids at any time prior to award of contract, waive any defects therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the City Government without thereby incurring any liability whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids and obligation to inform the bidder(s) of the ground(s) for the basis of BAC's action.

(Sgd.) MERLITO J. MAJARUCON
Head, BAC Secretariat

NOTED BY
(Sgd.) Atty. ANGELITO R. OROZCO
BAC Chairman

(PDI – July 1 & 8, 2006)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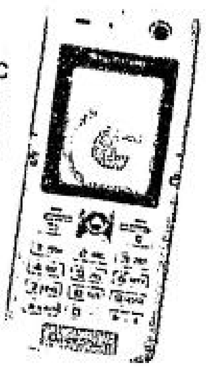

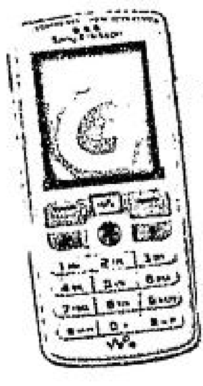

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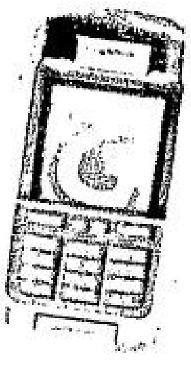

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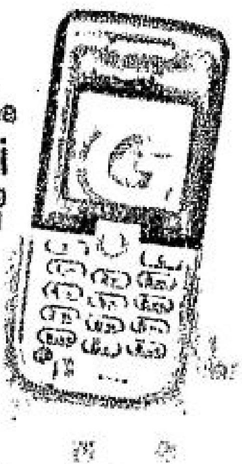

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W800i	13,000	9,000	3,000	FREE	FREE
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AMURAO

WHAT'S INSIDE

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NBI head, officials kiss and make up

Malacañang warns bureau about airing of dirty linen in public

By Margaux C. Ortiz and Christine O. Avendaño

THE SQUABBLE BETWEEN NATIONal Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Acting Director Nestor Mantaring and the NBI Investigators Mutual Benefit Association Inc. (IMBAI) has been resolved—for now.

Mantaring met yesterday with the bureau's deputy directors and division chiefs of both the NBI's investigative and non-investigative units to discuss issues raised in an IMBAI resolution withdrawing the group's support from the acting director.

Regular meetings

"All's well that ends well," Mantaring told reporters after the meeting. "We will now hold regular meetings to discuss the agents' concerns and grievances, if there are any."

In a resolution dated June 28, 16 IMBAI officials claimed the NBI had become stagnant under Mantaring's leadership.

Recall

Deputy Director for Intelligence Services Edmund Arugay, a member of the association's board of directors, said he would recommend the recall of the resolution as soon as another meeting among IMBAI members is convened.

The NBI "fight" irked Malacañang who told the officials not to air their dirty linen in public.

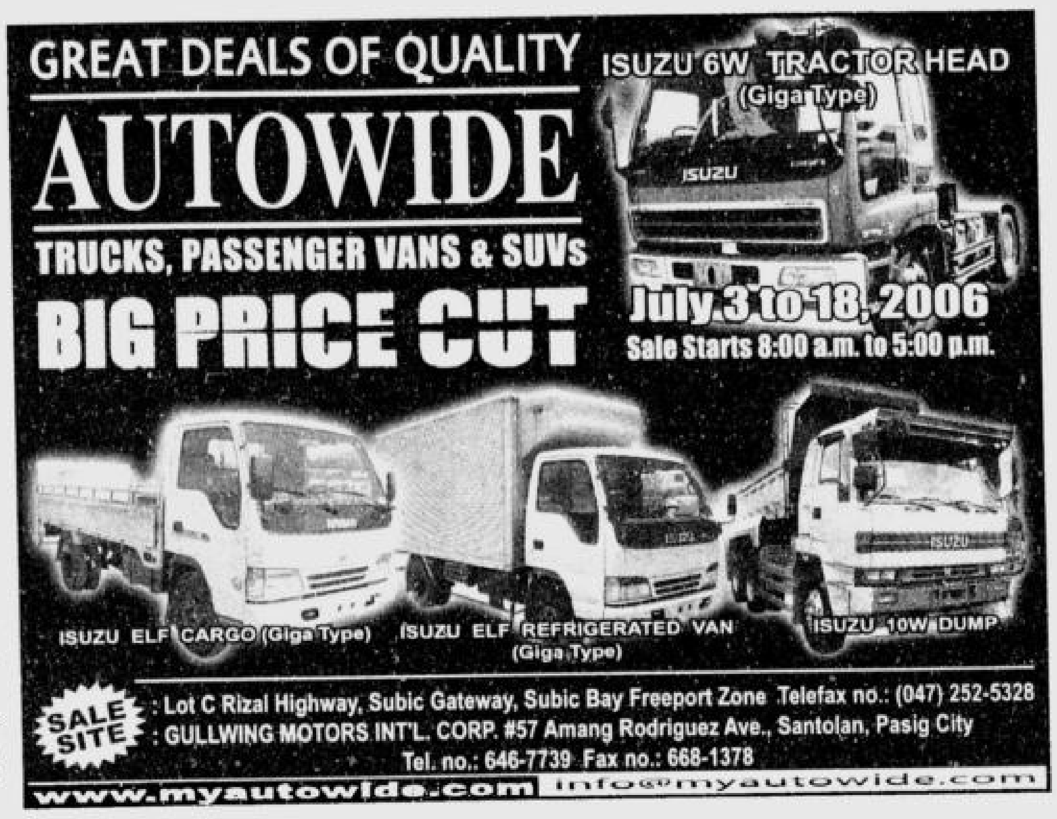
Presidential chief of staff Michael Defensor said Thursday the Palace and Justice Secretary Raul Gonzales told the NBI officials to settle their problems, among themselves, according to Defensor.

In their resolution, IMBAI also asked President Arroyo to appoint a "better NBI director."

Performance cited

The group scored Mantaring for "poor performance and dictatorial style of administration."

Mantaring assumed the top position in the bureau late last year following the death of NBI chief Reynaldo Wycoco.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Driver, 2 passengers die in NLEx road mishap

By Nancy C. Carvajal

THREE PEOPLE WERE KILLED in a vehicular accident on the North Luzon Expressway (NLEx) at dawn yesterday.

Following this latest accident, Benjie Suzara, spokesperson of the Manila North Tollways Corp., reminded motorists not to drive when they are sleepy.

Filomeno Adina, driver of a six-wheel truck, who was badly hurt, was able to tell investigators he fell asleep on the wheel when his vehicle rammed a large dump truck.

He died later while undergoing treatment at the Manila Central University.

His helpers Arnel Jean and Joselito Orbino were killed instantly.

In his statement to the investigators before he died, Adina said the accident happened at around 2:45 a.m. while they were traveling along Marulas, Bulacan.

The occupants of the dump truck were unhurt, Suzara said.

"Drivers should not drive when sleepy and should take a nap for even 15 minutes," Suzara told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

They could stop and walk around for a few minutes until the drowsiness passes, Suzara added.

Adina's truck, Suzara said, was bound for Manila and was travelling at a speed of 80-90 kilometers per hour when the accident occurred.

The maximum speed allowed on the highway is 80 kph.

Suzara said drivers, who could not stop, could fight tiredness and drowsiness by drinking cold water or leaving the windows open so they can take in fresh air.

Outdoor ads group against billboard ban

By Leila B. Salaverria

SAYING THERE WERE ENOUGH laws to regulate the putting up of advertising signs, the Outdoor Advertising Association of the Philippines (OAAP) has protested a reported plan to implement new regulations that would ban billboards along national highways.

The National Building Code Development Office (NBCDO) of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) has drafted a circular that would prohibit the putting up of advertising signs 100 meters from the center of national highways and transmission lines, and the removal of such structures within the area, in the interest of public safety.

The NBCDO said billboards pose a risk because they could distract drivers.

It also said billboards built haphazardly could collapse and harm people.

The draft circular is still being reviewed by the DPWH's legal department.

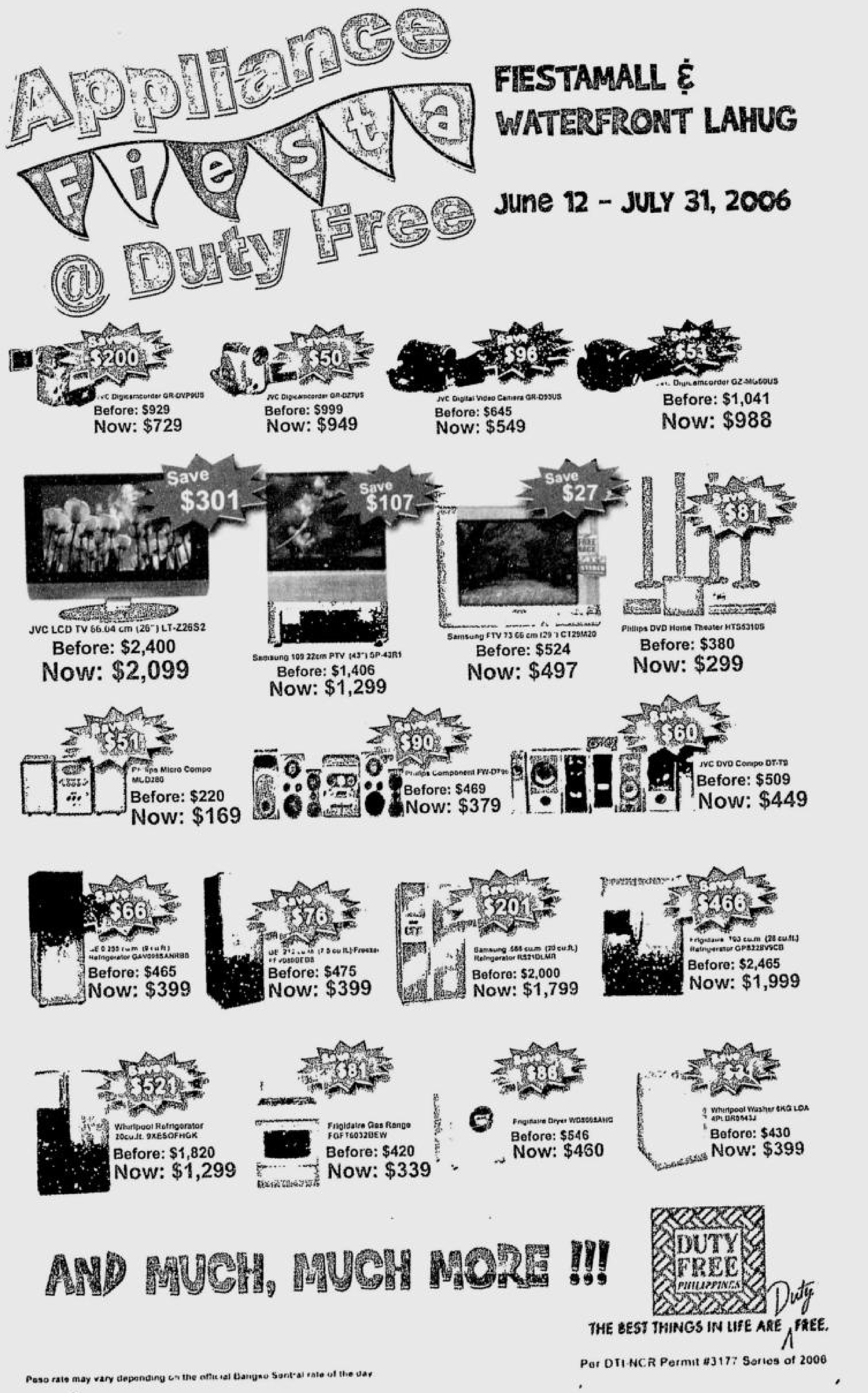
"The OAAP believes strict, proper and impartial implementation of existing laws such as the National Building Code of the Philippines and the Philippine Highway Act of 1953, by those who seek additional regulation, is enough to address the supposed issues of road and structural safety of billboards," the group said in a statement.

Though it did not mention the proposed NBCDO circular in its statement, the OAAP said the outdoor advertising industry had been placed in a negative light and threatened because of rogue outdoor advertising practitioners.

"The OAAP laments this latest move to unilaterally stifle an industry that is not only an integral part of mass media but also contributes to keep this country afloat during these trying times by providing jobs and precious internal revenue to the government, on the basis of isolated incidents from practitioners that do not adhere to the law or even the OAAP Code of Ethics and Trade Practices," it said.

The group also warned against regulating the content of billboards. DPWH Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane earlier said he was planning to discuss the content of billboards with groups concerned about the issue because outdoor ads featuring scantily-clad models could pose a distraction for motorists.

The OAAP also said that it welcomes reasonable regulations, but also asked that the advertising bodies be allowed to police its ranks.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FIESTAMALL & WATERFRONT LAHUG
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Save $50 JVC Digicamcorder GR-DZ7US Before: $999 Now: $949
Save $96 JVC Digital Video Camera GR-D93US Before: $645 Now: $549
Save $53 Digicamcorder Before: $1,041 Now: $988
Save $301 JVC LCD TV 66.04 cm (26") LT-Z26S2 Before: $2,400 Now: $2,099
Save $107 Samsung 109.22cm PTV (43") SP-43R1 Before: $1,406 Now: $1,299
Save $27 Samsung FTV 73.66 cm (29") CT29M20 Before: $524 Now: $497
Save $81 Philips DVD Home Theater HTS5310S Before: $380 Now: $299
Save $51 Philips Micro Compo MLD280 Before: $220 Now: $169
Save $90 Philips Component Before: $469 Now: $379
Save $60 JVC DVD Compo DT-T9 Before: $509 Now: $449
Save $66 Refrigerator Before: $465 Now: $399
Save $76 Freezer Before: $475 Now: $399
Save $201 Samsung 566 cu.m (20 cu.ft.) Refrigerator RS21DLMR Before: $2,000 Now: $1,799
Save $466 Frigidaire Refrigerator Before: $2,465 Now: $1,999
Save $521 Whirlpool Refrigerator 20cu.ft. 9XESOFHGK Before: $1,820 Now: $1,299
Save $81 Frigidaire Gas Range FGF T6032BEW Before: $420 Now: $339
Save $86 Frigidaire Dryer Before: $546 Now: $460
Whirlpool Washer 6KG LDA Before: $430 Now: $399
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Student gets boost from LLDA for biofuel project

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

WAGING A BATTLE AGAINST THE dreaded janitor fish?

The Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) is getting help from a 16-year-old student in Marikina City who has won an award in a science fair abroad.

The LLDA has been meeting with Raymond Joseph Amurao, a graduate of the Marikina City Science High School, who won in a science fair in Indiana, USA; in May for his work on janitor fish.

Amurao, who grew up in a community also facing problems with the fish considered as pests by fishermen, turned oil from janitor fish into biofuel, an alternative fuel for vehicles.

"The LLDA had been coordinating with us to commercialize the project. Some officials said they were willing to help me hold more experiments to improve the project," Amurao told the INQUIRER yesterday.

The LLDA has been implementing programs to control the rapidly growing number of janitor fish on Laguna De Bay—just like the Marikina City government, concerned about the Marikina River.

The janitor fish, also called sucker mouth fish, have been multiplying quickly in rivers and lakes, depriving other fish not only of nutrients but also space to grow.

But Amurao discovered in an experiment that the fish meat could generate substantial volumes of oil which could be processed into biofuel with the same fuel value as that of commercial diesel.

He said LLDA was also helping him look for local investors who could help them get the project going.

Life insurance firm gets 3 bomb threats in a day

By Nancy C. Carvajal

THREE OFFICES OF A LIFE INSURANCE company, including its headquarters in Makati City, received bomb threats yesterday morning, a company official said.

Anna Maria Soriano, senior manager of Insular Life Insurance Company, confirmed the phoned-in bomb threats at their offices in Alabang, Makati and Caloocan City. She said, however, that office operations were resumed after members of the police explosive units declared the premises free from any explosive materials.

"Occupants and guests of the buildings were immediately evacuated from the premises following the calls received by some of our employees," Soriano said. But a search of the buildings, she said, yielded negative results and employees and visitors returned to their offices before noontime. "It was business as usual," she added.

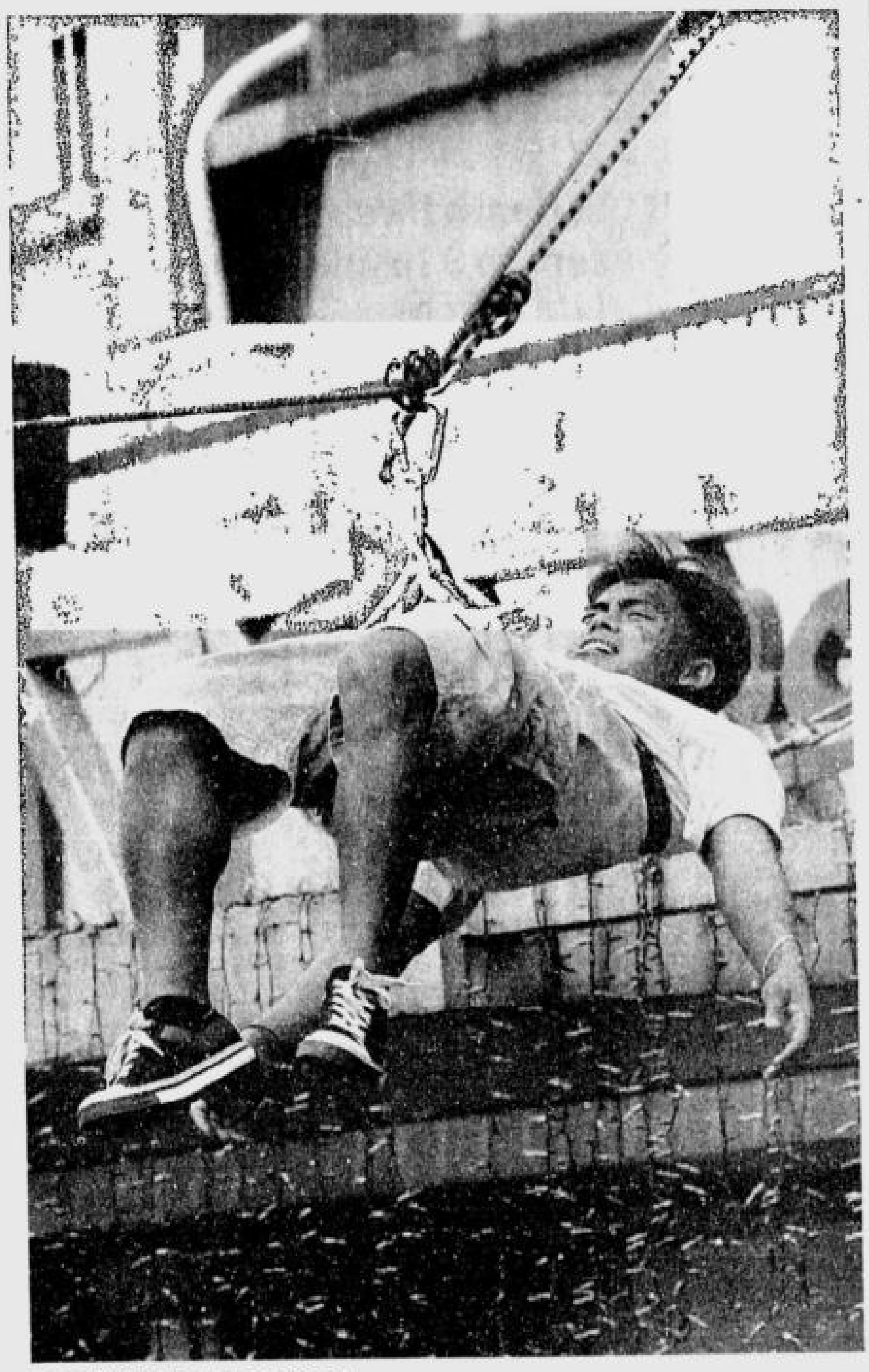
Soriano also said that they were fully cooperating with authorities and had already reinforced building security measures to ensure the safety of their tenants and guests.

Not pre-need

She also corrected earlier reports that Insular Life Insurance Company is a preneed company, stressing that they are only engaged in providing life insurance services.

"Insular is a life insurance company that has been in operation for 96 years," she said. She disclosed that in 2005, the company's total benefits to life policy holders reached P8.6 billion and its total assets amounted to P44 billion.

Soriano added that Insular's management would like to stress that their firm is the largest Filipino-owned life insurance company in the country and is the third largest among insurance companies.



NOT THE REAL THING
A "victim" from a simulated terrorist attack is brought down by a rescue team as part of the antiterrorist drill at the Araneta Coliseum, site of the much-awaited boxing match between Filipino champ Manny Pacquiao and Mexico's Oscar Larios this Sunday. RAFFY LERMA

Prison term for disposing illegal waste

By Jocelyn R. Uy

CLEAN UP OR GET THROWN IN JAIL.

The Taguig City government issued this warning after it discovered that residents along C-5 Road and employees of some government agencies had turned the major highway into a garbage dump.

The government also announced yesterday the start of an intensified campaign against illegal dumping by the city's Solid Waste Management Office (SWMO) as part of Taguig's efforts to intensify its cleanup drive in the city.

Proper way

"We need to discipline the public on proper waste disposal, and we will not tolerate anyone who insists on dumping their garbage just about anywhere and anytime they please," Mayor Freddie Tinga said in a statement yesterday.

He also warned that people throwing garbage along the main roads outside the scheduled time of collection would be arrested.

SWMO head Ronaldo Cruz said that under an ordinance passed last year, the penalty for illegal dumping of garbage was a fine of P500 for the first offense; P1,000 and a day of community service for the second offense; and P2,500 and imprisonment of not less than a month for the third offense.

On schedule

He also reminded C-5 residents they could only bring their garbage out when the garbage truck is already by their doorstep.

"Our personnel, with the help of the Environmental Police, have been deputized to arrest anyone dumping garbage outside of the scheduled hours. We are bent on enforcing the law," Cruz said.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
DESIGN OF DEFAULT MECHANISM
TO ENSURE SUFFICIENT RESERVE CAPACITY

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
PREPARATION OF PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT
SUPPORT/GUARANTEE FOR POWER SECTOR REFORM PROJECT
CONSULTING SERVICES
PHRD Grant No. TF055609

The Government of the Philippines, through the Department of Energy (DOE) and with grant assistance from the Policy and Human Resources Development (PHRD) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), is implementing the Preparation of Private Sector Development Support/Guarantee for Power Sector Reform Project (the "Project").

The DOE intends to apply part of the proceeds for consultant services to develop market refinements or mechanisms that can ensure that there is sufficient capacity to provide maintain a minimum reserve margin. The first priority is to advise on the operation of the Philippine Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM) and the development of contract markets that can provide a suitable investment climate. The second component of the project is the design of a 'backstop mechanism' for ensuring sufficient capacity that does not displace or, as far as possible, distort the operation of the market. This would assist the Government discharge its obligations under Section 71 of EPIRA. The project should work within the basic design of WESM but may propose subsidiary or related mechanisms such as capacity obligations or minimum energy contracting requirements.

The deliverables will be provided within six (6) months of the appointment of the consultants. The consultant must demonstrate:

1. In depth understanding of the operation of competitive electricity markets.
2. Extensive practical experience in advising on the design of competitive electricity markets and supporting the implementation of these markets
    a. Reference on at least one case where the consultant was directly responsible for the implementation of a competitive electricity market with a bid-based pool (net or gross) must be provided.
3. Experienced in project financing, especially in power generation in competitive markets.

The DOE now invites eligible consultants to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested consultants must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (brochures, description of similar assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills among staff, etc.). Consultants may associate to enhance their qualifications.

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank's *Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers* published in January 1977 (revised in September 1977, January 1999, and May 2002).

Interested consultants may obtain further information at the address below during office hours 0800 to 1700 hours.

Department of Energy
Attn: Melinda L. Ocampo, Undersecretary
4th Floor, DOE Bldg. Energy Center, Merritt Road
Global City, Taguig Metro Manila, Philippines
Tel: (632) 8402173
Fax: (632) 8402067
E-mail: **mio_phg@doe.gov.ph** and/or **mycaps@doe.gov.ph**

Expressions of interest must be delivered to the address below by 26 July 2006, 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon.

The Bids and Awards Committee
Department of Energy
Energy Center, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila

(PDI July 1 2006)

PNU faculty, studes see DepEd official's hand in choice of prexy

By Tina G. Santos

FACULTY MEMBERS AND STUDENTS OF the Philippine Normal University (PNU) suspect that a former high-ranking official of the education department was behind the nomination and appointment of lawyer Lutgardo Barbo as their new president.

Without naming the person, several PNU teachers and students claimed they believe that Barbo's appointment was facilitated by the DepEd official.

"How come he got the position when we know for a fact that compared to the two other leading candidates for the post, he is the least qualified?" said one professor, who requested anonymity.

The professor cited the report submitted by the search committee tasked to help the Board of Regents (BOR) screen the candidates and recommend these for the short list of the three most suitable academic leaders, enumerating the leading nominees' strong and weak points.

The report, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER, showed that Barbo, compared to the other candidates, Dr. Twila Punsalan and Dr. Ester Ogena, had the least number of strong points and the biggest number of weak points.

The committee, led by chair Dr. Minda Sutaria, considered Barbo's high potential for raising funds from Congress and his extensive experience in local and national networking as among his strengths.

A former governor of Eastern Samar, Barbo also earned points for his rich experience in local governance and for having a strong legal background and peacemaking skills. On the other hand, the seven-man search committee noted that Barbo had limited knowledge of issues and developments in teacher education, lacked a graduate degree in education, had very limited research experience in the field of education, and had no management experience in a higher education institution.

Meanwhile, the search committee noted that Ogena and Punsalan both have an ambitious yet achievable vision and mission for the PNU as well as familiarity and broad knowledge on issues and concerns relevant to education and to the PNU community.

An expert in Information and Communications Technology as well as in Science and Mathematics education, Ogena's other strengths included her strong leadership qualities and managerial capabilities, her broad knowledge and experience in resource generation from local and international funding agencies, her creative and innovative skills, and her strong linkages with local and foreign organizations, such as Unesco. Ogena's weakness was her limited management experience in higher education institutions.

With 28 years of experience in PNU, Punsalan, who also has a Full Professor VI rank and is a professorial chair holder, was cited for having a clear vision, competence in research and values education, and a strong determination to lead the PNU.

BABANSE
BOMBASTIK
PUMPING STATION

FLOOD CONTROL
Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco (third from right, top row) and students visit the new Babanse Bombastik Pumping Station, part of the town's flood control program, found in Barangay North Bay Boulevard South. The school community is the most affected when floodwaters rise. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Appellate court affirms decision on BF gates

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE BATTLE OVER THE BF Homes gates between the Parañaque City government and the United BF Homeowners Association Inc. (UBFHAI) maybe temporarily suspended.

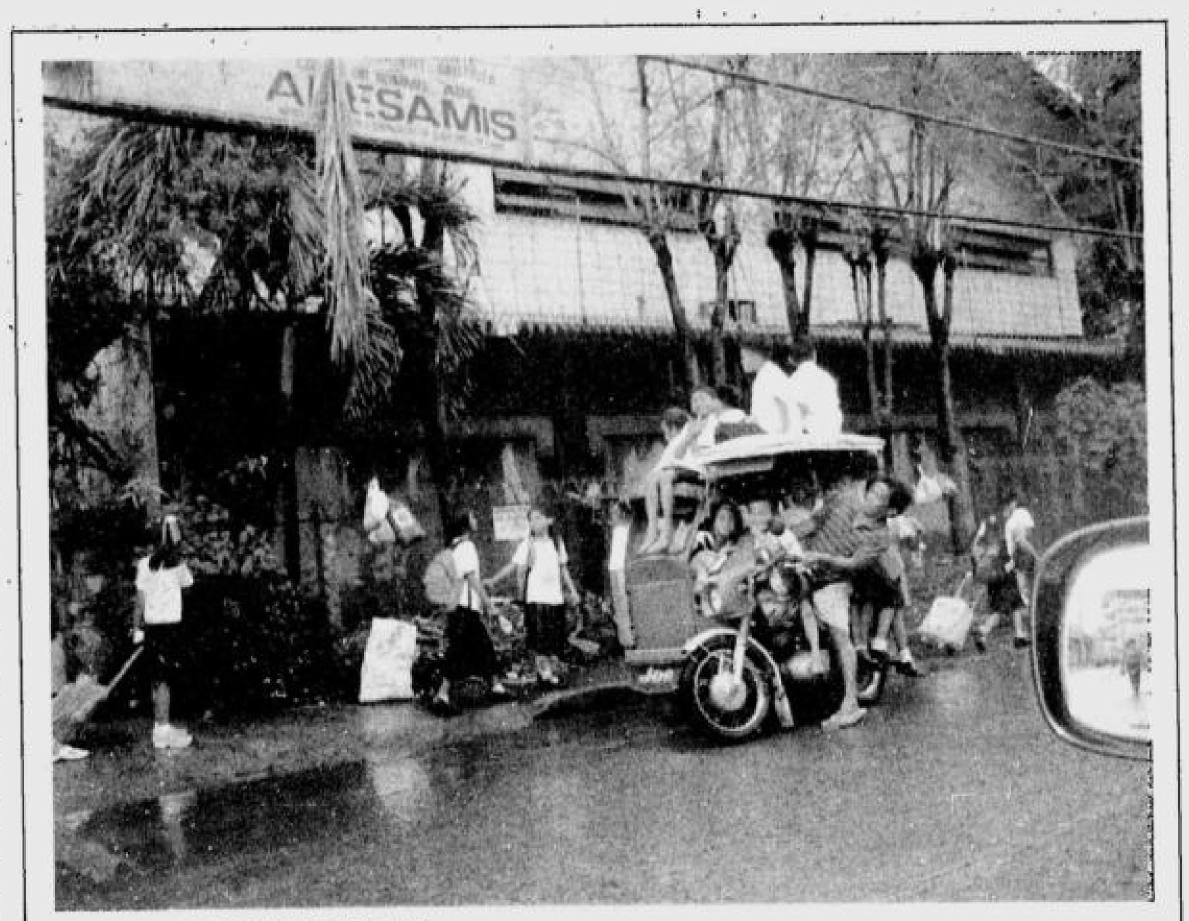
The Court of Appeals affirmed its order in March, preventing the local government from opening the gates of the subdivision to the public. The resolution was issued in response to the motion for reconsideration filed by the local government after the CA's Eighth Division upheld three months ago UBFHAI's rights over the gates.

The Special Tenth Division said that after reviewing the appeal, "it found nothing therein that would persuade us to deviate from the conclusion arrived at by the Eighth Division..."

Nelson Lacambra, spokesperson of Mayor Florencio Bernabe, told the INQUIRER that the city government would comply with the order until the merits of the case had been fully heard.

The CA earlier ordered the local government and the police to stop enforcing Ordinance 00-15 until its validity was established.

The ordinance opened to the public two main roads inside the subdivision, El Grande and Aguirre Avenues. UBFHAI alleged this resulted in the worsening of the traffic problem and the rise in crime incidents. Lacambra said the city government was also considering filing an appeal with the Supreme Court for the lifting of the writ of injunction issued by the Eighth Division.



ZOOM, ZOOM AND AWAY

This tricycle brings about a dozen pupils from San Jose Elementary School in Quezon City to their homes daily. The children and the driver smile throughout the drive and do not seem to mind the ordeal. CERES P. DOYO

JOANNA Bacosa with son: Welcome visitors at the Big Dome? RAFFY LERMA

Pacquiao's 'son' may be at ringside

By DJ Yap

AS BOXING HERO MANNY PACquiao faces Oscar Larios tomorrow at the Araneta Coliseum, he may catch a glimpse of a little boy who calls him father cheering him at ringside. *(See related stories on A1 and A27.)*

Or, then again, he may not.

Joanna Rose Bacosa, who claims to be Pacquiao's former girlfriend and mother of his two-year-old son, has a couple of ringside tickets for Sunday's "Mano a Mano" card.

But she is still undecided whether or not to watch the bout with her son, who is "very excited" at the chance of catching Pacquiao's match live.

If they decide to go, it would be the first time in many months the boy would see his "father" up close again.

"He wants to watch the match badly. That's his father after all. But it's up to his mother," said Bacosa's lawyer Victor Rodriguez.

"There is no final decision yet. If she is comfortable with the security arrangement, they might go. Otherwise, they would just watch the fight on TV," he said.

Rodriguez represents Bacosa in her case against Pacquiao for his alleged failure to provide sufficient financial support for the boy and his alleged threat to kidnap the boy if Bacosa went public with her claims.

Pacquiao has neither confirmed nor denied being the boy's father but he denied Bacosa's allegations that he failed to support the boy and that he had threatened to abduct him.

Rodriguez said Bacosa had three ringside tickets (each costing P30,000), but he did not know if she bought them, or if they were given to her. The lawyer also said he did not know who would get the third ticket.

If it were up to Rodriguez, he would prefer that his client watched the bout on television.

"It would be better if she just stayed home. There might be problems with security. For instance, they might be mobbed by Pacquiao's fans," he said.

"Their presence could be misinterpreted by hard-core Pacquiao fans as a scheme to distract him ," Rodriguez added.

METROBRIEFS

MMDA strikes back

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority (MMDA) is set to file next week countercharges against Mandaluyong City policemen who arrested its employees while dismantling billboards along Edsa on Tuesday night. Facing charges of illegal arrest and arbitrary detention are against PO3 Ruben Ballong, PO2 Fredinil Dividina, PO2 Seldon Salazar, PO2 Patricio Mendoza, PO2 Maximo Kotoner, PO2 Augusto Baldoza, PO2 Lorenzo Cambri, PO2 Edwin Pascual, PO2 Renato Quizo, PO2 Dante Alario PO2 Victor Ver, PO2 Avelino Baluyot, PO1 Raymund Fajardo and PO1 Pepito Ramos. The sidewalk clearing operations group's legal counsel, Leopoldo Tomas said the agency would also file administrative cases against the policemen before the National Police Commission. "We believe that lives and property are more important than business and that the banners, streamers and billboards that were dismantled were illegally posted and are placed in an area not suitable for advertisement," Tomas said yesterday. *Jocelyn R. Uy*

St. Paul reunion

ALUMNI of St Paul University in Dumaguete City (SPUD) who are now residents of Metro Manila are invited to attend a meeting today at the residence of Ms Cecile Galvez at No. 840 Summerville Barangay Pansol Calamba City, Laguna, to be informed about outreach projects the SPUD Alumni Manila Chapter is undertaking for alumni families. C all Ms. Galvez at (04) 9545102 or chapter president Jun Catan of Mapecon at Tel No. 5250434.

La Salle concert

LA SALLE GREEN HILLS '69 is hosting "Mama Mi Verde" at 8:30 tonight at the Manila Pavilion's Alegria Hall on United Nations Avenue. Supported by Classes '66, '68 and '71 and other alumni, the rock concert cum dance party aims to raise funds for the poverty reduction micro-finance project of the Philippine Micro-enterprise Development Foundation, a nonprofit NGO that serves 10,000 poor families in Metro Manila, as well as the La Salle Green Hills.night school. Funds will also be used for a foundation for needy La Sallians.

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Iran given a week to respond to offer

MOSCOW—WORLD POWERS GAVE Iran one more week Thursday to provide a "clear and substantive response" to an international proposal on suspending uranium enrichment, but Tehran immediately rejected the deadline.

Foreign ministers of the G8 group of leading nations said EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana and Iran's chief nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani will meet next Wednesday to discuss the plan

"We expect to hear a clear and substantive Iranian response to these proposals at the planned meeting," the ministers said in a statement in Moscow, where they were preparing a July 15-17 summit in Saint Petersburg.

An official in the US delegation here said foreign ministers from the six countries behind the plan would gather a week later, on July 12, to evaluate Iran's response.

But, speaking at the United Nations in New York, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said Tehran would not respond before late August.

Iran's response "will be clear and substantive," he said. "But the proposed package contains questions and ambiguities which must be cleared."

He said that although Solana may be able to answer some questions, "I think the time until August is not a long time for submitting a response, and that's very natural and normal."

The plan, drawn up by the five permanent UN Security Council members plus Germany, offers Iran a package of incentives and multilateral talks in return for halting uranium enrichment, the process that makes fuel for reactors but also atom bomb material.

Iran insists that its nuclear program is for generating electricity and that uranium enrichment is needed to provide the fuel. The European Union and the United States suspect Iran of hiding a military project.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said here there was unity among G8 countries—Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States—on the plan.

However, there was no talk of what might follow if Iran rejects the idea.

"We did not discuss anything beyond the offer which we all made in good faith. It is a positive offer and we expect a positive response in good faith," Lavrov said.

Earlier, French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy said that Iran could enter negotiations if it first accepted the international plan.

"If the response is negative... then it is clear that the international community will be firm and that, in particular, we will continue what we have begun in the Security Council," he added, referring to talks about possible sanctions against Iran.

Russian President Vladimir Putin earlier this week said that Moscow did not intend "to join any sort of ultimatum, which only pushes the situation into a dead end."

China and Russia, which have close diplomatic and economic ties with Iran, have generally taken a much softer line than the Western powers throughout the Iranian nuclear standoff.

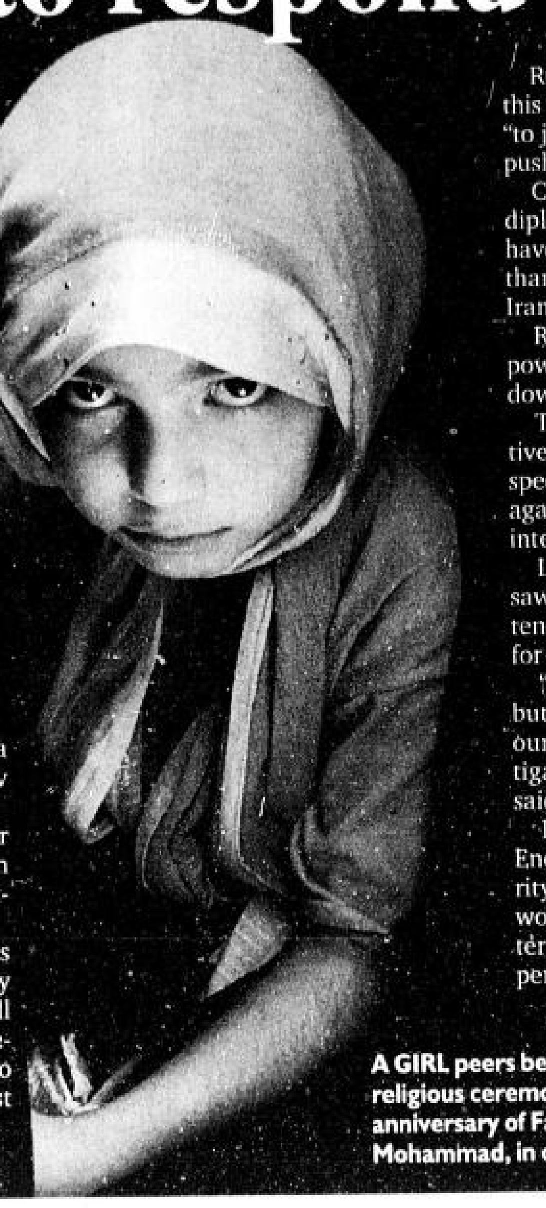
Russia is building Iran's first atomic power station at Bushehr and has turned down US appeals to stop the contract.

The two nations only backed the incentives plan after ensuring there were no specific threats to impose UN sanctions against Iran if they did not comply with international demands.

Larijani reiterated Thursday that Iran saw "no deadline," and restated its insistence on developing nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

"Our nation is insisting on their rights, but they did not listen to us and referred our case to the Security Council for investigation, which was a bad thing to do," he said.

In February, the International Atomic Energy Agency reported Iran to the Security Council for hiding sensitive nuclear work and losing the confidence of the international community by breaking a suspension of enrichment activities. *AFP*



A GIRL peers between Iranian women as she attends a religious ceremony to commemorate the death anniversary of Fatima, daughter of Prophet Mohammad, in central Tehran June 29. REUTERS

Kuwait women fail to win a seat

KUWAIT—WOMEN FAILED TO win any seat in their first attempt to compete in a Kuwaiti parliamentary election, edged by powerful Islamist and other pro-reform ex-MPs who swept the poll, results showed on Friday.

Analysts and newspapers said a strong showing by the opposition—a loose coalition of pro-reform ex-MPs, Islamists and liberals—raises the possibility of deeper tension between the new assembly and the government.

"Women failed us," Zikra al-Majdali, a 39-year-old lawyer and mother of four who ran in an ultra-conservative Islamist area, told Reuters, referring to high hopes among female candidates that women's votes would at least get one of them into the National Assembly.

Thursday's poll was called after Emir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah dissolved parliament last month following a standoff between the government and opposition over electoral reforms.

Analysts said the election results were not likely to resolve the dispute.

"It's a heavyweight assembly that puts the government in front of some tough choices," said al-Watan daily. Leading newspaper, al-Qabas, termed the outcome "a loss for pro-government candidates."

"The same tension will be there," Mustafa Behbahani of consultancy Kuwaiti Gulf Group told Reuters, adding the house and government "may reach a compromise between them ... but if the status quo stays, tension will heat up."

None of the 28 women among a total of 249 candidates who stood for office was able to win a seat in the race. Women make up 57 percent of the Gulf Arab state's 340,000 eligible voters.

"The outcome was not unexpected but there's a feeling of some sorrow," said Majdali. "Good luck to the men who won; I hope all those promises to tackle women's issues don't turn out to be just slogans."

Women won the right to run for office and to vote in May 2005 in the oil-producing US ally. Overall turnout was heavy at over 65 percent, state media said. *Reuters*

Rising tide of elderly may swamp China's economy

SHANGHAI, CHINA—SHANGHAI is rightfully known as a fast-moving, hypermodern city—full of youth and vigor. But that obscures a less well-known fact: Shanghai has the oldest population in China, and it is getting older in a hurry.

Twenty percent of this city's people are at least 60, the common retirement age for men in China, and retirees are easily the fastest growing segment of the population, with 100,000 new seniors added to the rolls each year, according to a study by the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. From 2010 to 2020, the number of people 60 or older is projected to grow by 170,000 a year.

By 2020 about a third of Shanghai's population, currently 13.6 million, will consist of people over the age of 59, remaking the city's social fabric and placing huge new strains on its economy and finances.

The changes go far beyond Shanghai, however. Experts say the rapidly graying city is leading one of the greatest demographic changes in history, one with profound implications for the entire country.

The world's most populous nation, which has built its economic strength on the basis of seemingly endless supplies of cheap labor, China may soon face manpower shortages. An aging population also poses difficult political issues for the Communist government, which first encouraged a population explosion in the 1950s and then reversed course and introduced the so-called one-child policy a few years after the death of Mao in 1976.

That measure has spared the country an estimated 390 million births but may ultimately prove to be another monumental demographic mistake. With China's breathtaking rise toward affluence, most people live longer and have fewer children, mirroring trends seen around the world.

Those trends and the extraordinarily low birth rate have combined to create a stark imbalance between young and old. That threatens the nation's rickety pension system, which already runs large deficits even with the 4-to-1 ratio of workers to retirees that it was designed for.

As workers become scarcer and more expensive in the increasingly affluent cities along China's eastern seaboard, the country will face growing economic pressures to move out of assembly work and other labor-intensive manufacturing, which will be taken up by poorer economies in Asia and beyond, and into industries based more on services and information.

"For the last two decades China has enjoyed the advantage of having a high ratio of working-age people in the population, but that situation is about to change," said Zuo Xuejin, vice president of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences.

"With the working-age population decreasing, our labor costs will become less competitive, and industries in places like Vietnam and Bangladesh will start becoming more attractive." *NYT*

Japan world's oldest country, census reveals

TOKYO—JAPAN HAS OUTPACED Italy as the world's oldest country, with the elderly population hitting a new high and fewer young people choosing to start families, according to census figures released Friday.

Japan has been racing to find ways to motivate people to have more children amid fears of a future demographic crisis as a smaller working population supports a mass of pensioners.

Japan's elderly population rose to 21 percent, or 26.82 million, of the total population of 127.76 million in 2005, up 3.7 points from the previous census taken in 2000, the internal affairs ministry said.

The rate topped the one in Italy, where the elderly form 20 percent of the population. The third oldest country was Germany, where the elderly—defined as people aged 65 or older—accounted for 18.8 percent, it said.

"The population is dwindling across the entire nation," the ministry said in a report accompanying the figures.

"Compared with the level in 2000, the aged population rate is rising in all prefectures with society graying in the entire nation," it said.

The findings coincided with the start of a two-day meeting in Tokyo of Asian ministers tasked with improving gender equality—seen as a critical issue in encouraging young women to have children.

"We all know that putting in place a gender policy is not enough—what truly counts is concrete action," said Kuniko Inoguchi, Japan's first minister to tackle the birthrate problem.

Japan "will continue to vigorously promote gender equality and undertake reforms to create a fair society in which both men and women can fully exercise their capacity to achieve self-fulfillment," she said.

The census said Japan's population aged 14 and younger last year hit a new low of 13.6 percent, or 17.40 million, down one point from 2000. *AFP*

Dutch premier to meet queen, tender resignation

AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS—Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende was to tender his Cabinet's resignation to Queen Beatrix Friday, a move that will ultimately lead to new elections.

His government collapsed Thursday, victim to infighting after a failed attempt to strip former lawmaker Ayaan Hirsi Ali, the country's best known critic of Islam, of her citizenship.

Under the Dutch system, the queen will accept Balkenende's resignation, then meet with a special adviser and the leaders of each of the parties in parliament. Together, they will assess whether there is support for Balkenende to continue with a minority conservative government for a short time or whether to schedule new elections as soon as possible.

In either case, elections will be held by the end of the year, rather than in May 2007 as originally scheduled, and politicians of all stripes began campaigning instantly after Balkenende announced his intention to resign Thursday.

"I support honest politics and looking to the future, doing what you promise, taking care that you make the Netherlands stronger," Balkenende told reporters as he walked off the floor.

Opposition leader Wouter Bos said Balkenende's failure to keep his Cabinet together showed a lack of leadership.

"The people are longing to show that they want a different kind of policy, and now they'll get the chance to show it," Bos said.

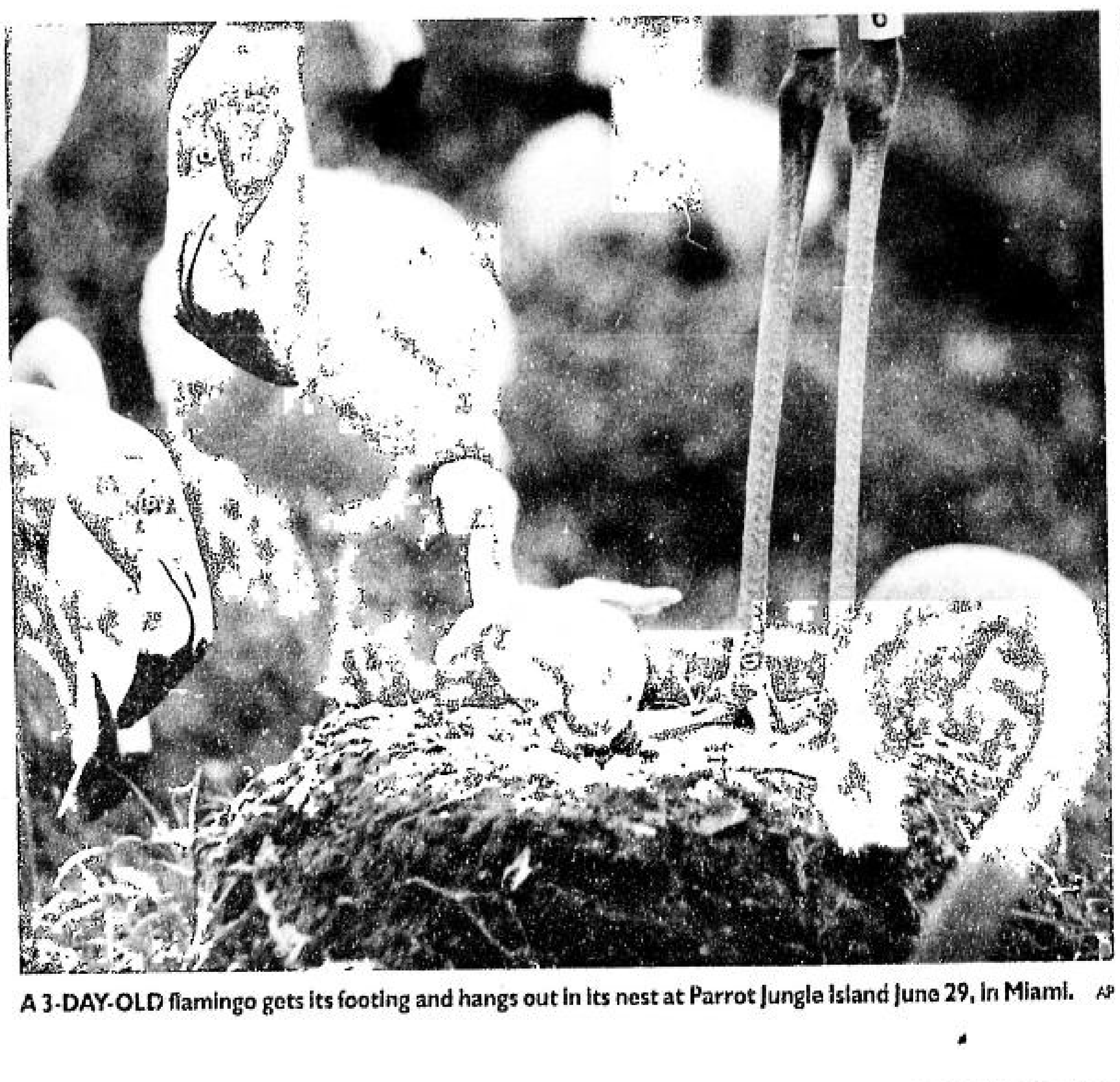
The libertarian VVD, the second party in Balkenende's coalition, focused on putting the blame for the breakup on the third and smallest D-66 party, which had said it could no longer work with VVD's Immigration Minister Rita Verdonk after her role in the Hirsi Ali affair.

Verdonk has been both the most popular and the most disliked figure in Balkenende's Cabinet, carrying out policies that drew criticism from human rights groups but applause from Dutch who blame immigrants for social problems. *AP*

AYAAN Hirsi Ali, at center of conflict. AFP

DUTCH PM Peter Balkemende in June 21 photo. REUTERS

Bird flu meet warns of gaps in knowledge, preparedness



A 3-DAY-OLD flamingo gets its footing and hangs out in its nest at Parrot Jungle Island June 29, in Miami. AP

PARIS—A MAJOR CONFERENCE on avian flu, convened amidst a rising death toll among humans and a widening geographical spread among birds, warned Thursday of weak defenses and worrying gaps in knowledge about the lethal virus.

Experts at the start of the two-day Paris meeting said that, compared with previous health scares, the world was being much smarter in preparing for the risk that the H5N1 virus could leap from poultry to humans and unleash a murderous pandemic.

But, they cautioned, there remain too many holes in basic understanding how the virus is transmitted by wild birds, whether it could be carried by other animals and how it could one day become contagious among humans.

At the same time, illegal trade in poultry is flourishing and veterinary surveillance in parts of Asia and Africa is sketchy at best, providing plenty of opportunities for the disease to spread undetected among flocks and leap to humans, they said.

Albert Osterhaus of the Netherlands' National Influenza Center and the Erasmus Medical Center in Rotterdam, said the specter of three flu pandemics in the last 90 years—in 1918, 1957 and 1968—lurked in the wings.

"Is this going to happen again? The answer's 'yes.' Are we properly prepared? The answer's 'no,'" Osterhaus said bluntly.

Avian influenza is highly contagious and lethal among poultry. Transmitted from birds to humans in close proximity, it can cause sickness and death.

Since the virus resurfaced in 2003 after initially emerging in Hong Kong in 1997, there have been 228 human cases, 130 of them mortal, according to the latest WHO figures.

There were 41 deaths in all of 2005, but 54 in the first six months of 2006 alone. In 2003, just one country (Vietnam) reported a death; this rose to two in 2004, five in 2005 and seven so far in 2006.

Yet such numbers would pale into insignificance if H5N1, by mixing with an ordinary human flu virus, picked up genes that would make it not only lethal for humans but also easily transmissible among them.

The longer and the more widely the virus circulates among poultry, the bigger the risk that it could make this leap, said Guenael Rodier, a special adviser for communicable diseases at the European department of the World Health Organization. *AFP*

Spain to open talks with ETA in bid to end 40 years of unrest

MADRID—SPANISH PRIME MINISTER Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero announced Thursday that his government would open talks with the armed Basque movement ETA to try to end nearly four decades of separatist unrest.

Three months after the group declared a permanent ceasefire, Zapatero said the time was right for dialogue but cautioned that it would be "a long, hard and difficult" process.

He gave no date as to when the process might start and said his government would not compromise its core principles.

His comments were welcomed by ETA's banned political wing Batasuna, the Basque regional government and the European Union, but Spain's opposition Popular Party refused its support, saying there could be no talks with a "terrorist" group blamed for the deaths of some 850 people.

In a statement, Zapatero said that Madrid "will begin a dialogue with ETA, while maintaining the irrevocable principle that political questions are only resolved with the legitimate representatives of the popular will." "The process will be long, hard and difficult," he added.

"We will approach it with determination and caution, unity and detachment, and always, always, with respect to the memory of the victims." Zapatero said he was acting under a parliamentary resolution passed in May last year authorizing dialogue with ETA as soon as it abandoned violence, which it promised to do in a ceasefire declaration in March this year.

He said he trusted ETA to keep its word, noting that it was the first time in its 38-year armed struggle that it had declared a permanent truce and that it had been three years since its last deadly attack, in May 2003.

Contacts with the ETA leadership would take place discreetly, Zapatero went on, firstly essentially on matters of procedure and timetable before focusing on disarmament and the fate of ETA members held in Spanish jails.

Nevertheless he warned that "democracy will not pay any political price to achieve peace." In Brussels, European Commission chief Jose Manuel Barroso said he shared the hopes "of all those who look to a future in which Spain is free from the scourge of terrorism." Pernando Barrena, a Batasuna leader, hailed the announcement, noting that Zapatero made a "statement of great importance … affirming that the Spanish government would respect the decisions that are freely adopted by Basque citizens." *AFP*

YOUNG Jewish men grieve as the body of Jewish settler Eliahu Asheri is laid to rest during his funeral at the Mount of Olives cemetery in Jerusalem June 29. An armed Palestinian group yesterday claimed the killing of Asheri in the occupied West Bank where the Israel Army found his body. AFP

Israel planes hit Gaza in widening offensive

GAZA—ISRAELI WARPLANES POUNDED Gaza on Friday, setting ablaze the Interior Ministry offices of the Hamas-led Palestinian government in a widening military effort to secure the release of a captured soldier.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said in a newspaper interview that the Hamas Islamist group had given "conditional approval" for the release of 19-year-old Corporal Gilad Shalit, who was captured in a cross-border raid on Sunday.

But while Israel held off a threatened ground attack into northern Gaza to give Egyptian mediation time and under international pressure to avoid killing civilians, there was no suggestion the Jewish state would agree to any conditions.

The factions that captured Shalit—including the armed wing of Hamas—demand the release of Palestinian prisoners even for information on whether he is alive or dead.

Israeli warplanes roared over Gaza in darkness, striking more than 20 targets.

One missile hit the office of Hamas Interior Minister Saeed Seyam, setting the building ablaze. Seyam was not there at the time. The army said it was used to plan attacks on Israel.

Planes also struck an office of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, part of more moderate President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah group, as well as roads and areas used to fire rockets at Israel. An Islamic Jihad militant was killed, the first fatality from the offensive. The Israeli army said he was part of a rocket squad.

"Israel's escalation will not help it get the soldier back and they should leave this to the diplomatic channel," said Palestinian cabinet spokesperson Ghazi Hamad.

Israel holds Hamas responsible for Shalit's safe return, though the government says it played no role in his abduction.

Mubarak said in an interview with Egypt's al-Ahram daily that Hamas leaders had told him they had given approval to hand over the soldier in order to avoid an escalation, but he did not specify what conditions they had set.

He also said Israel had not yet agreed. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's office had no comment. Israeli radio stations said no proposals had been received.

Tzachi Hanegbi, a senior member of Olmert's Kadima party, told Army Radio: "Israel will not give in to terrorist blackmail and will not enter into negotiations to release murderers in Israeli prisons." Israel seized dozens of Hamas cabinet members and lawmakers in the West Bank on Thursday in what the Islamist group called an attempt to topple its government. Hamas, sworn to destroying Israel, is already struggling under a US-led aid embargo.

Every day, demonstrators in Gaza urge militants not to hand over Shalit unless Israel frees Palestinian prisoners in return.

Israeli troops entered southern Gaza on Wednesday in their biggest raid since pulling out of the strip last summer, but they delayed a threatened push into northern Gaza, an area often used by militants for firing rockets into Israel.

Senior diplomatic sources said Israel had put the assault on hold to allow more time for mediation. An opinion poll published on Friday showed that most Israelis favoured giving diplomacy a chance before large-scale military action.

Israel is also under international pressure to avoid the civilian casualties that could result from an offensive into the alleyways of the densely populated Gaza Strip, home to 1.4 million Palestinians.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and other Group of Eight foreign ministers urged Israel on Thursday to show restraint in Gaza. *Reuters*

Ford plans shift in focus away from hybrid vehicles

DEARBORN, MICH.—DETROIT AUTO COMPANIES, which have lagged far behind their Japanese rivals in developing and selling hybrid vehicles, are taking a new direction in a bid to emerge as leaders in their own right on environmental issues.

The latest sign of this shift occurred Thursday, when the Ford Motor Co. confirmed that it would not meet its widely publicized goal of selling 250,000 hybrid vehicles a year by 2010, a goal set last fall when energy prices spiked after Hurricane Katrina.

Instead, Ford plans to focus its attention on flexible-fuel vehicles, which can run on gasoline and another type of fuel like ethanol, William Clay Ford Jr., its chief executive, told employees in a memo distributed Wednesday.

Ford was the first Detroit company to sell hybrid models, and it will continue to develop them, William Ford said in an interview here. But that would be part of a broader program to produce cleaner, more-efficient vehicles, he said.

"This is in no way a lack of commitment to hybrids," Ford said. "It's an expansion of our commitment to other technologies."

Ford, known for his lifelong interest in environmental causes, acknowledged that he would be criticized for the move.

Environmental groups, as expected, were quick to criticize the company. The Sierra Club said it was "appalled" that Ford was pulling back on its commitment to hybrids in favor of flexible-fuel vehicles.

Daniel F. Becker, director of the group's global warming program, said that because Ford had already backed off a previous promise to build more fuel-efficient sport utility vehicles, the company was "rapidly becoming the automaker that cried wolf." *NYT*

Alleged S. Korea kidnap victim bids tearful farewell to mother

SEOUL—A SOUTH KOREAN MAN WHO DENIED he had been kidnapped by North Korea 28 years ago bade farewell Friday to his mother after a tearful family reunion sanctioned by the authorities in the Stalinist state.

Kim Young-Nam, 45, saw his mother for the first time in almost three decades this week, when she arrived Wednesday for an emotional three-day meeting in the North Korean tourist resort of Mount Kumgang.

He wept on Friday as his 82-year-old mother Choi Gye-Wol boarded a bus for the 10-kilometer (six-mile) ride back to South Korea.

Kim held up his 7-year-old son for a farewell kiss and Choi told the child: "Be a good boy. Listen to your mom and dad and don't fight with other kids." Kim disappeared as a 16-year-old schoolboy from a South Korean beach in 1978 and intelligence authorities in Seoul say he was kidnapped by North Korean agents.

Earlier this year Kim's mother had publicly begged Pyongyang to allow her to see her long-lost son before she died.

At a stage-managed press conference on Thursday, Kim denied that he had ever been kidnapped and also repeated Pyongyang's official assertion that his former wife, a Japanese woman kidnapped by North Korea in 1977, had died.

Kim had a daughter with the Japanese woman, Megumi Yokota, and a son with his second wife, a North Korean woman.

North Korea admitted kidnapping Yokota and 12 other Japanese in the 1970s and 1980s to train North Korean spies.

Pyongyang sent five kidnap victims back to Japan following a summit meeting between the two countries in 2002 and said that all the others were dead.

But the Japanese believe Yokota and other kidnap victims may still be alive, rejecting the North Korean position as untrustworthy.

PICTURE taken in 1993 in North Korea shows the daughter of Kim Young-nam, abducted by N. Korea agents in 1978. REUTERS

At the emotional farewell with his mother, Kim had lifted his mother from a US-made wheelchair he had given her and had carried her in his arms to the waiting bus.

His mother had held him tightly and refused to let go for several minutes, sobbing loudly.

Kim removed his metal-framed glasses and wiped away tears as his North Korean wife said to her South Korean mother-in-law, "Mother, stay healthy." Kim, who South Korean intelligence authorities say is a senior official in North Korea's spy apparatus, has invited his mother and sister to come in August to Pyongyang, where he said he lives comfortably in a big apartment. *AFP*

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

MARKET SURVEILLANCE AND POLICY ANALYSIS SUPPORT TO DOE

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
PREPARATION OF PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT
SUPPORT/GUARANTEE FOR POWER SECTOR REFORM PROJECT
CONSULTING SERVICES
PHRD Grant No. TF055609

The Government of the Philippines, through the Department of Energy (DOE) and with grant assistance from the Policy and Human Resources Development (PHRD) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), is implementing the Preparation of Private Sector Development Support/Guarantee for Power Sector Reform Project (the "Project").

The DOE intends to apply part of the proceeds for consultant services for assistance in the manpower development in the field of market surveillance and assessment, specifically on the establishment of system of market monitoring and ability to analyze/assess the development of the WESM. This is valuable to DOE as the policy making body of the power sector in order to determine if the economic benefits of WESM are consistent with the overall electricity sector goals and policies of the national government. Specifically, the consultant would advise/develop quantitative systems and protocols for market monitoring, map out a resource plan (including training) for DOE that defines their respective roles more fully and sets down the basis for their interaction. Likewise, the consultants would conduct assessment of WESM operation using the traditional performance indicators and other accepted indicators, electricity rates shall be examine on various specific segments of the value change, evaluate the impact of on-going privatization scheme in the context of WESM operation, conduct study on the effectiveness and impact to consumers of the 10% requirements for DUs to source their supply from WESM and subsequently provide recommendations, if warranted. The consultant would also develop demand participation scheme consistent with the WESM.

Provide recommendations on WESM rules considering the result of the above studies.

The deliverables will be provided within eight (8) months of the appointment of the consultants. The consultant must demonstrate:

1. In depth understanding of the operation of competitive electricity markets.
2. Extensive, detailed and practical experience in assessing and providing advice on structure and operation of competitive energy markets.
3. Extensive experience internationally and in the Philippines in advising on competition law and policy issues.
4. Experience in identifying and assessing market power and designing market monitoring systems, especially in regard to competitive energy markets.
5. High level economic, legal and policy/regulatory advice skills.

The DOE now invites eligible consultants to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested consultants must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (brochures, description of similar assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills among staff, etc.). Consultants may associate to enhance their qualifications.

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank's *Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers* published in January 1977 (revised in September 1977, January 1999, and May 2002).

Interested consultants may obtain further information at the address below during office hours 0800 to 1700 hours

Department of Energy
Attn: Melinda L. Ocampo, Undersecretary
4th Floor, DOE Bldg. Energy Center, Merritt Road
Global City, Taguig Metro Manila, Philippines
Tel: (632) 8402173
Fax: (632) 8402067
E-mail: **mlo_phg@doe.gov.ph** and/or **mycaps@doe.gov.ph**

Expressions of interest must be delivered to the address below by 26 July 2006, 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon.

The Bids and Awards Committee
Department of Energy
Energy Center, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila

(PDI July 1 2006)

Osama to Bush: Don't rejoice too much

PARIS—JIHAD OR HOLY WAR WILL GO ON IN IRAQ despite the death of local al-Qaida chief Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, according to a new audio message attributed to the terror network's leader Osama bin Laden.

In the comments aired on an Islamist website on Friday, the speaker paid a glowing tribute to Zarqawi, the most wanted man in Iraq who was killed in a US air strike on his hideout on June 7.

"We will keep up our fight to bleed your money dry, kill your men and so that (your forces) go home defeated, as we defeated you in Somalia," the man said to be Bin Laden told Bush.

He also called on US President George W. Bush to return the remains of the Jordanian-born extremist to his family.

"I say to Bush; you must return the remains of the hero to his family. Don't rejoice too much. The banner (of jihad) has not fallen. It will be picked up by another lion of Islam. We will continue our fight against you everywhere, in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in Somalia and in Sudan."

Bin Laden, the mastermind of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the United States and the Western world's wanted man, was last heard of in an audiotape release in May.

In the 20-minute tape Friday, which could not be authenticated, the speaker also called on Jordan's King Abdullah II to allow the repatriation of the body of Zarqawi.

"I tell your agent in Jordan: enough tyranny. You prevented Abu Musab from returning home when he was alive. Don't stop him doing so now," he said.

Jordan has said its intelligence services played a key role in finding Zarqawi, who faced death sentences in his home country but who was freed by the monarch in a general amnesty in 1999.

Bin Laden defended Zarqawi against critics who attacked him for killing Iraqis, chiefly Shiite Muslims, and not just US-led forces who invaded Iraq in March 2003 to oust the former president Saddam Hussein.

"I tell those who accuse the lion of our nation of killing certain segments of the Iraqi people: if someone claimed that a man blinded one of his eyes, wait to see the accused, because the plaintiff might have blinded both his eyes," he said.

Zarqawi, who orchestrated a bloody campaign of attacks and beheadings of hostages, was Iraq's most wanted man with a $25-million US bounty on his head, like Bin Laden. *AFP*

AL-QAIDA fugitive leader Osama bin Laden in undated picture. AFP

Tape excerpts

CAIRO, EGYPT—EXCERPTS FROM BIN Laden's audio message:

"... We remember his words, 'We are fighting in Iraq with our eye on Jerusalem' which we will only be able to retain with a Koran that gives guidance and a victorious sword... He set the foundation to defend his religion, win the return of Palestine, God willing, and avenge the downtrodden. He exhausted the Americans, the allies of the Jews, and made them stagger, killing their men, shaking their foundations, bleeding them of money and breaking their ranks, and humiliating them... "Al-Zarqawi's story will live forever with the stories of the nobles, so don't cry over one who is not missing ... He can teach the world a lesson on how to seize freedom—for freedom can never be given to those cowering under the dome of democracy—and how to resist tyrants.

"... The enemy attacked Iraq ... the mountains shook .. and in these difficult circumstances, the knight of Islam Abu Musab appeared like a fierce lion ... He appeared with a group of believers. They were 17 men—not 17 armies. They got together and vowed to God to achieve victory for his religion... They entered the war and began to fight, using a good number of Kalashnikovs and antitank mines and bazookas; Abu Musab had been in the holy war with his brothers against the Russians (in Afghanistan).

"To those who accuse the knight of Islam of killing a certain sector of Iraq's people, I say to them ... Abu Musab had clear instructions to focus his fight on the occupiers, particularly the Americans and to leave aside anyone who remains neutral. But for those who refused (neutrality) and stood to fight on the side of the crusaders against the Muslims, then he should kill them whoever they are, regardless of their sect or tribe. For supporting infidels against Muslims is a major sin. ...

"Then I tell (US President George W.) Bush: You must return the body of the hero to his family. And don't be too happy. ... We will continue to fight you and your allies everywhere, in Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and Sudan to run down your resources and kill your men until you return defeated to your nation, just as we defeated you before in Somalia. And I tell your minion in Jordan: Enough tyranny. You prevented Abu Musab from entering his homeland while he was alive, don't prevent that now ... What scares you about Abu Musab after he's dead?" *AP*

General: Taliban growing stronger because of Iraq

KABUL—AFGHANISTAN'S TALIBAN INSURgents are growing stronger because the world's attention was distracted by Iraq, a top British general said.

"I'm critical of the whole international community for not listening sufficiently closely to all Afghans, in particular the Afghan government," said Gen. David Richards, commander of the Nato force in Afghanistan, in a BBC interview.

Richards' comments follow criticisms by President Hamid Karzai of the way antiterror operations have been conducted. Karzai last week said it was unacceptable that hundreds had been killed in Afghanistan, even if they were Taliban.

Richards will take command at the end of July in southern Afghanistan, where the rebels are most active.

"There's no doubt there is a resurgent Taliban problem," he told the BBC's Pashtu-language service.

Asked the reason for the resurgence, he replied: "Largely it's because people took their eye off this ball and a vacuum was allowed to develop and that vacuum was filled by the Taliban.

"I think, probably internationally, for a while Iraq absorbed people's interest and resources."

Afghanistan in recent months has suffered the worst violence since a US-led attack ousted the Taliban government in December 2001 for failing to hand over Osama bin Laden.

Richards said, however, that it "is not too late to put the Taliban back in the box."

"As well as the stick, we need to offer many more carrots," he added, saying the Nato force would be able to offer development and humanitarian aid *AFP*

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WHAT'S INSIDE
England, Portugal ready /A31

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Nadal survives, faces Agassi next /A30

Sullen Pacman ready for Larios showdown

Roach sure Pinoy icon will make weight limit

MEXICAN Oscar Larios is all set for battle. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

By Francis Ochoa

A SOMBER, TOTALLY FOCUSED Manny Pacquiao yesterday skipped routine talk with the media after his final workout, on the eve of the official weigh-in for his noontime encounter against Mexico's Oscar Larios tomorrow.

The post-workout atmosphere at the gym was anything but light.

Gone was the trademark smile and the witty one-liners. In its place was an unsmiling ring icon who, right after being toweled off by a couple of assistants, sat at the edge of the ring inside the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines (Abap) gym, his head buried in his palms.

"He's ready to go," declared trainer Freddie Roach.

After a full meal last night and a short road workout early today, Roach said Pacquiao should tip the scales at 128 lbs, well under the 130-lb limit of his super featherweight bout against Larios, who is expected to hit the ceiling at today's 8 a.m. weigh-in at the Discovery Suites.

"I'm sure he's going to be under [the] weight limit," said Roach, confident enough to allow his ward "a good meal [last night]."

"He just sweated it out a little bit [yesterday]," said Roach, who is handling Pacquiao for the 10th time in the boxer's career, one which has produced an impressive 41-3-2 win-loss-draw record, spiked with 32 knockouts.

Pacquiao went through some seven rounds trading mitts with Roach, shadow boxing, hitting the speed ball and skipping rope.

After that, the Filipino boxing hero looked sullen. He obliged a few requests for pictures and autographs, but did away with his post-workout talk with the press.

After the weigh-in, Pacquiao will begin to pack in the pounds and Roach expects him to be at the neighborhood of 140 lbs for his noontime battle against the upset-seeking Larios.

"He's going to be more or less at the same weight he was in when he fought [Erik] Morales," said Roach.

The 27-year-old Pacquiao entered the ring at 141 lbs against Morales, who the Filipino introduced to the canvas for the first time in the Mexican boxing legend's career.

Larios (56-4-1, 38 knockouts) hopes to hammer out a victory that could boost a career that's on a dive after a December loss to world 122-lb. champ Israel Vasquez. The Larios camp claimed the Guadalajara, Mexico, native is perfectly settled in the super featherweight division.

"He's more or less fighting in his natural weight and with the training he's had, we're confident we can win," said Rafael Mendoza, the 29-year-old boxer's manager.

Pacquiao gives away ₱5M tickets

AMID REPORTS OF SLOW TICKET SALES, Manny Pacquiao turned the lights on at the gates by giving away between P5 and P7 million worth of tickets to friends who want to see him in action against Mexico's Oscar Larios.

Organizers had to offer a buy-three-take-one-free scheme Thursday, but latest trends showed the Big Dome could be packed for tomorrow's fight, also dubbed the Thrilla in Manila II, in reference to the classic Muhammad Ali-Joe Frazier bout held in the country in 1975.

Popular ring announcer Michael Buffer, who patented the oft-repeated "Let's get ready to rumble" fight-opener line, arrived yesterday to work the Pacquiao-Larios tiff.

He was a day late of his original schedule, after missing his plane.

"It was a no-brainer," Buffer told a television talk show when asked why he decided to accept the invitation extended by the Pacquiao camp.

Buffer praised the Filipino boxer, listing him as the best boxer pound-for-pound fighter in the world along with current IBF welterweight champion Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor

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Modest goals for Tamaraws in new UAAP cage season

By Jasmine W. Payo

THEIR GOAL IN THE UAAP MEN'S BASketball tournament has become slightly modest.

"Our target is the top two, the twice-to-beat advantage in the Final Four," said Far Eastern Tamaraws coach Bert Flores.

Apparently, the defending champions have become more cautious in baring their goals, a clear departure from their confident attitude last year when they harped about winning it all right from Day 1.

Flores, after all, has lost the core of the team that swept rock-solid La Salle in the Finals last year.

The biggest—literally and figuratively—departure was Arwind Santos, the league Most Valuable Player of the last two seasons who will join the PBA Draft in August.

"*May halong kaba* (There's nervousness)," admitted Flores, just more than a week before the UAAP gets off the ground. "Arwind is a big loss to the team, especially in rebounds and blocks."

The impact of Santos' loss will be hard to ignore, as the team not only lost his averages of 13.1 points, 12.7 rebounds and 2.3 blocks of last year, but also the leadership that has steadied the team in the past.

Moreover, the Tamaraws have to do without the services of other key players, including Mark Isip and shooter RJ Rizada.

But Flores still holds high hopes for the team which will be led by veteran guard Jeff Chan, sophomore playmaker Jonas Villanueva and 6-foot-6 center Francis Barcellano.

"We still have tall wingmen," said Flores. "Our advantage is still our our defense. We still have a good point guard in Jonas."

Flores also cited the Tamaraws' good run in pre-season competitions, including the invitational tourney in Jakarta, Indonesia.

"We achieved a lot in other leagues," he said. "In Jakarta, we were able to compete against China, Indonesia and Thailand. We just lost in the knockout game for the finals against China."

Flores picked University of the East and Ateneo as the strongest teams this season.

"If we get past UE (in the first round), we'd know if we still have a chance," he said. "The players have adjusted (to their respective roles). We just have to improve on our rebounding and our ball movement."

Red-hot Beermen drag Bulls to Game 7

By June Navarro

THE DIRECTIVE FROM RED BULL COACH YENG GUIAO WAS SIMple: Don't let San Miguel Beer get away with outside shots early.

But the Beermen proved unstoppable as they forced a Game 7 with the Bulls following a 116-101 victory in their Gran Matador Brandy-PBA Philippine Cup semifinal duel last night at the Cuneta Astrodome.

In the second game, Purefoods defeated Alaska, 99-96 to also force a Game 7 in their half of the semifinal bracket.

Almost flawless from the field, Chris Calaguio and Olsen Racela boosted the Beermen to a 55-44 halftime lead and eventually set up a make-or-break showdown for a title slot tomorrow.

Calaguio, who made four of his five attempts in the first two quarters, pumped in a personal conference high 23 points while Olsen Racela tallied 18 points, 16 coming in the first half.

"We lived to fight another game," said San Miguel coach Jong Uichico, who has yet to win a best-of-seven series when down 2-3. He also lost all three previous race-to-four series after trailing before Game 6.

Danny Seigle set a career milestone by becoming the 53rd player in league history to reach 5,000 points. He did the feat in 264 games.

Seigle scored 21 points to sustain his 20-plus output for the 18th time.

"I don't really care how many points I score," said Seigle. "Ask any athlete and he will tell you that what matters most is winning the championship."

Kerby Raymundo scored eight of his 25 points in the final seven minutes, including three free throws that completed the Giants' comeback from 11 points down. The Aces had a 90-79 lead before Raymundo exploded.

"We haven't achieved any thing yet. We just tied the series," said Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio.

RED Bull coach Yeng Guiao (right) barks instructions to Topex Robinson as San Miguel Beer's Olsen Racela maneuvers in search of the open man in yesterday's game at the Cuneta Astrodome. ERIK ARAZAS

The scores:

SAN MIGUEL 116—Calaguio 23, Seigle 21, Racela 18, Pena 18, Ildefonso 10, Hontiveros 9, gonzales 6, Cablay 5, Adriano 4, Noble 2, Kong 0, Lopez 0.

RED BULL 101—Villanueva 21, Pennisi 18, Tugade 14, Robinson 9, Fonacier 8, Bugia8, Cruz 7, Hrabak 6, Baguio 5, Valenzuela 3, Najorda 2.

Quarters: 26-21, 55-44, 88-75, 116-101.

Manila bares boxing program

MANILA SPORTS COUNCIL (Masco) chief Arnold "Ali" Atienza yesterday announced the capital city is embarking on an ambitious program aimed at discovering and developing future Filipino world boxing champions.

Atienza, also the Presidential Assistant for Youth and Sports, said a state-of-the-art boxing gymnasium will soon rise at the city government owned Manila Boystown Complex located in Marikina where former street children are being molded to be assets of society.

The son of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza added that satellite boxing gymnasiums will also be built at the San Andres Sports and Civic Center in Malate and at the Tondo Sports Complex to serve as venues for discovering young potentials from all over the Big City.

"We will select the less-fortunate, street children and young deserving prospective boxers in the city and bring them to the Manila Boystown Complex where they will not only be developed as world class fighters but will also be given proper education," Atienza said.

Team Maynila head coach Alan Alegria, the former Philippine junior welterweight and welterweight champion who was ranked fifth by the World Boxing Association in 1998, has been tapped to train and develop the youthful prospects.

Amonsot, Domingo worthy fight subs

NEWEST RING SENSATION REY "BOOM-Boom" Bautista and knockout artist Randy Suico are out of the Manny Pacquiao-Oscar Larios undercard, but their replacements have equally impressive credentials for tomorrow's fights at the Araneta Coliseum.

Boxing promoter Sammy Gello-ani said Bautista's replacement, Michael Domingo, is the current Philippine junior lightweight king and is undefeated in his last seven fights.

Suico's substitute, Czar Amonsot, is the reigning WBO Asia-Pacific super featherweight champion, who recently scored two unanimous decision victories against Mexicans in Las Vegas.

Although Domingo has 13 defeats in 43 fights, he showed a lot of improvement since transferring to the ALA Boxing Gym according to Gello-ani in yesterday's Accel-sponsored Scoop sa Kamayan session.

Amonsot, Gello-ani added, is also in top shape when he was tapped to replace Suico since he was already preparing for his title defense on July 22 against an Indonesian fighter.

Bautista has been declared unfit to fight and is in a hospital recovering from a viral infection. He was supposed to fight veteran Mexican Alejandro Montiel (51-7-0 with 30 knockouts). Suico pulled out against another Mexican, Silverio Ortiz, (17-9-0 with 7 KOs) after he has been given a world title shot.

Suico, 24-2 with 21 KOs, is scheduled to challenge World Boxing Association lightweight champion Juan Diaz of Mexico on July 15 at the famous MGM Grand Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. He replaced Russian Almazvek Raimlulov.

Unlike Pacquiao, who is bound to earn $1 million against Larios, who is assured of $450,000, Amonsot will get only $3,000 while Domingo will receive a little over $1,000.

Ang Liga's fourth season kicks off today

ANG LIGA, THE COLLEGIATE LEAGUE SANCtioned by the Philippine Football Federation (PFF), kicks off today at the PhilSports field in Pasig City.

EDSA Football Club takes on University of Santo Tomas at 2 p.m. before Mendiola FC 1991 battles the University of the East at 4.

PFF president Johnny Romualdez said the competing teams in the fourth season of Ang Liga shows that it has expanded.

Conceptualized by national coaches Aris Caslib and Marlon Maro, Ang Liga was designed to give senior players additional competitive matches and serve as a run-up to the UAAP and NCAA seasons that begin late in the year.

San Beda College, under coach Aris Caslib, won the first two seasons of Ang Liga while College of Saint Benilde lifted the trophy last year.

GMs Paragua, Torre open bids in Ozamiz chess tilt

GRANDMASTERS MARK PARAGUA AND EUGENE Torre open their REspective bids in the first Ozamiz City chess tournament starting today at the Rep. Hilarion Ramiro Jr. gymnasium in Ozamiz City. Paragua and Torre, the country's top two players in the recent Turin Chess Olympiad, are the favorites in the chase for the P30,000 top purse in the three-day tournament. They will be up against the likes of International Masters Oliver Dimakiling, Barlo Nadera and Richard Bitoon and FMs Vince Alaan and Rico Salimbagat. National Chess Federation of the Philippines secretary-general Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino Jr. and Ozamiz Mayor Reynaldo Parojinog Sr will make the ceremonial moves.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

Xavier Alumni, Air Force booters try to keep lead

POWERHOUSE SQUADS Xavier Alumni Football Club and Philippine Air Force face separate opponents today in a bid to strengthen their grip of the solo lead in the 2006 Adidas Futsal Championship at the FMAC Gym in La Salle Green Hills in Mandaluyong City.

Xavier, which is coming off a tough 3-2 decision over Ateneo last weekend, takes on the AFP Selection in the 3 p.m. match in the men's Second Division-A, while Air Force, tests the mettle of Kaya FC in the 6 p.m. schedule in the men's First Division.

Xavier Alumni, backstopped by Raymond Cardova, and Air Force both tote 3-0-0 (win-draw-loss) marks in leading their respective groups in the tournament sponsored by adidas in cooperation with the National Capital Region Football Association.

Emelio Caligdong, Air Force's high-scoring attacker, is again expected to shine against the Aly Borromeo-led Kaya FC.

Today's hostilities begin at 2 p.m. with the clash between Union FC and El Magistrado, which are currently tied for the lead in the men's Second Division-B with identical 2-0-0 marks.

In the lone women's match, the third-running De La Salle University tackles the University of Asia and the Pacific Dragons (0-1-2) at 4 p.m.

Other matches pit the Philippine Army (2-0-0) against Superfriends (1-0-1) in the men's First Division at 5 p.m., and Veterans (1-0-2) against the Philippine Navy (0-1-2), also in the men's Second Division.

NATIONAL team mainstay Aly Borromeo (left) presses Kaya FC's attack against Navy defender Norman Somoza during the two teams' match in the Adidas Futsal tourney.

SPORTSWATCH

FIGHT SPAWNS TEXT CRAZE: Everyone is cashing in on Sunday's showdown between Manny Pacquiao and Oscar Larios. A local firm, Text Entertainment Games (E-Games), in partnership with ABS-CBN, has introduced a new text service called Mano Milyonaryo that allows Filipinos to bet on the fight through text. E-Games is selling pre-paid cards that bettor-texters can buy and load up. A text/bet costs P10 each, and players can bet as much as they want by texting to a special number on the Smart network. Fourteen texters who placed the correct bets will be randomly chosen and will join a grand raffle on July 7, 2006. A total of P1.5 million in cash prizes await lucky texters.

Sporting arms show all set at Megamall

THE 2006 DEFENSE & SPORTING ARMS SHOW PART II UNFOLDS ON JULY 13-17 at the Megatrade Hall of SM Megamall B, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City. Organized by the Association of Firearms and Ammunition Dealers of the Philippines (Afad) and Tradeshow international, Inc., the event brings together under one roof companies related to home defense, sports shooting and outdoor activity industry. Visitors will get a glimpse of the latest defense and sporting firearms, ordnance, hunting gear and apparel, sights, scopes, magazine clips, night vision equipment, accessories and allied equipment from companies and organizations reputed to be the finest in the trade. Speedy gun license processing is also among the services in the five-day event.

80 fights up as SJC 3-cocker gets going

EIGHTY FIGHTS ARE ON TAP IN THE UNITED BACKYARD BREEDERS ASsociation's special 3-cock derby which kicks off today at the San Juan Coliseum with Sagupaan Complexor 3000 as sponsor. This will be UBBA's second offering at SJC, according to pit manager Pete Rivera. The group's Summer 3-cock derby last April 10 was won by Oliver Osorio's entry UBBA Warhorse RL and Bobby Bumatay's MG CF BJB Sasha. The derby follows the venue's Fastest Win One-Cock Ulutan from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For inquiries, call the SJC office at 725-6563, 725-5369 or 0917-8041691.

Roligon derby kicks off today

THE ANNUAL "HATAWAN SA TAG-ULAN 6-COCK DERBY, A TOP ATTRACtion at the Roligon Mega Cockpit, gets under way at 1 p.m. today with Lakpue Drug Inc. and Thunderbird Enertone as sponsors. More than 150 fights are on tap in today's 2-cock elimination round. Other elimination rounds will be held on July 4 and 6. The semifinal and final rounds kick off on July 8 and 11 A prize pot of P3.5 million will be given to the winners regardless of the actual number of entries, said host Rolly Ligon. For inquiries, call 851-2275, 833-1638 or 852-9812.

Cainta cockfest slated July 6

THE BIGGEST COCPIT IN RIZAL PROVINCE, THE CAINTA FAIR CENTER, REopens on July 6 with the holding of the popular Fastest Win-One Cock Ulutan. The event offers a total prize pot of P611,000 for an entry fee of P2,200, according to George Bueno and Aba Badiola, operators of the 8,000-capacity arena. As grand opening bonus, the first five winners will get a 14-inch color TV while the sixth to the 10th placers will receive one mountain bike each. All fight winners will pocket P2,000. The event starts at 8 a.m. For inquiries, call the CFCC office at 655-3334, 655-2992 or 0918-2620338 (Aba).

Dolphins turn back Stags for lead; Blazers score

By Marc Anthony Reyes

JASON CASTRO CAME THROUGH WITH A SHOT STAB WITH 13.9 seconds left to lift Philippine Christian University to the solo lead with a 74-72 triumph over San Sebastian last night in the NCAA men's basketball tournament at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

The Dolphins squandered a nine-point lead in the final three minutes before clinching their second victory in three games.

"Next time, we have to learn to protect our lead, but I will take this win anytime," said PCU coach Joel Dualan.

Gabby Espinas led the Dolphins with 24 points, eight rebounds and two steals.

Castro finished with 11 points and six rebounds.

Earlier, Martin Urra Jr. completed a three-point play with 41.7 seconds left as host St. Benilde made up for its lackluster debut last week by trouncing Perpetual, 79-76.

Fouled by Michael Kong as he drove in, the 6-foot-3 Urra made the bonus shot to give the Blazers a 79-74 cushion en route to their first win in two games.

"Credit should go to the players," said St. Benilde coach Caloy Garcia. "My players showed that we can win as a team."

The Altas dropped to 1-1, in a tie with San Beda and Mapua. The Stags, meanwhile, took their second loss in three outings.

The Stags rallied from as far down as 46-58 to tie the game at 72 on free throws by Miguel Lindaya in the last 40 seconds.

But their effort went to waste as Castro got away with the game-clinching twinner.

STANDINGS	W	L
PCU	2	1
Letran	1	0
St. Benilde	1	1
Perpetual	1	1
Mapua	1	1
San Beda	1	1
S. Sebastian	1	2
Jose Rizal U	0	1

GAMES MONDAY
(*Ninoy Aquino Stadium*)
12 noon—SSC-R vs CSJL (Jrs/Srs)
4:00 p.m.—SBC vs CSB (Jrs/Srs)

The senior scores:

Second Game

ST. BENILDE 79—Layug 19, Robles 15, Johnston 14, Sevilla 10, Manding 7, Urra Jr. 5, Manlapaz 5, Aldover 4, Urra III 0, Trillo 0, Libunao 0, Cadiz 0.

PERPETUAL 76—Misa 26, Joe 14, Bauzon 12, Kong 8, Reyes 6, Lee 4, Manuel 3, Galabin 3, Racho 0, Perturbos 0, Mendoza 0.

Quarters: 21-22, 39-35, 58-56, 79-76

Third Game

PCU 74—Espinas 24, David 13, Castro 11, Garrido 7, Santos 7, Graham 5, Amparado 4, Navarro 2, Belga 1, Salem 0, McCoy 0.

SSC 72—Vicente 21, Viray 16, Lindaya 12, Bulawan 6, Juan 6, raymundo 5, De Leon 4, Ballesteros 2, Quiamco 0, Najorda 0, Sagad 0.

Quarters: 22-25, 45-34, 58-50, 74-72

La Salle, SSC start V-League title series

GAMES TODAY (*Blue Eagle Gym*)
2 p.m.—San Sebastian vs La Salle

LA SALLE AND SAN SEBASTIAN COLLEGE, the country's top collegiate volleyball teams today, highlight their rivalry today with the start of their best-of-three Shakey's V-League championship series at the Blue Eagle Gym.

This time, the feud takes on a foreign accent with both teams fielding one Thai import each in the 2 p.m. tussle. The UAAP champion Lady Archers, winner of the first two conferences, are seeking to stretch their dominance of the league.

The Lady Stags, reigning NCAA champion, had a rough sailing in the eliminations but recovered and struck hard to make it to the finals through the five-of-eight semifinal incentive. They defeated Adamson, 25-13, 25-16, 23-25, 27-25, last Thursday.

The Lady Archers, on the other hand, secured the first finals berth after sweeping their elimination round games.

In those matches, Thai import Jindarat Kanchana was rested in a clear ploy to freshen up her over-used knees.

However, San Sebastian's Jaroensri Bualee is all warmed up for the match, having come from a tough match against Adamson where she scored 26 points.

"We draw our strength from her," San Sebastian coach Roger Gorayeb said of the 23-year-old, 5-foot-9 Thai who has the best percentage on attacks in the league.

But with Bualee and Kanchana expected to even up the odds, the pressure is on the locals to perform their back-up chores extra well.

Key Pilipinas Basketball meeting today

THE STAKEHOLDERS OF PILIPINAS BASKETBALL will convene at 9 o'clock this morning at the Holiday Inn-Galeria Hotel to discuss and establish the organization's future activities.

Lead convenor and Philippine Basketball Association commissioner Noli Eala said the meeting brings together all the major stakeholders to craft the plan of action as well as the mission-and-vision of the association for the next five years.

The gathering is a whole-day affair.

Meanwhile, Tac Padilla, president of the National Basketball Conference, said the NBC is definitely interested to become an active member of Pilipinas Basketball.

He made the statement in a letter addressed to Eala. Padilla said he intends to join the basketball summit but is currendy participating in a shooting competition in preparation for the Doha, Qatar Asian Games.

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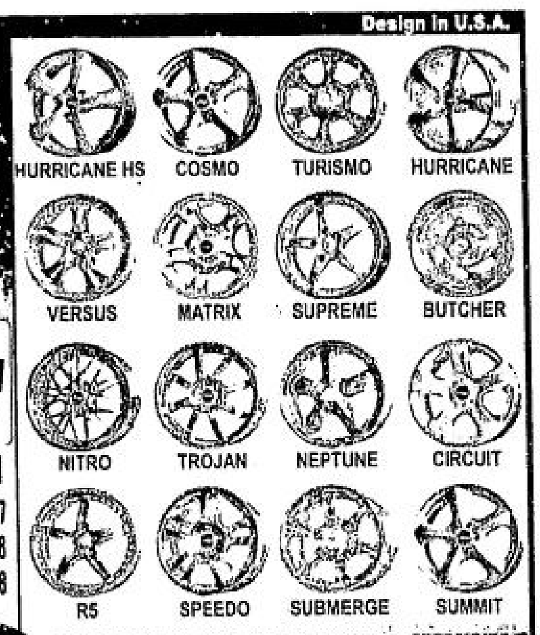

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Holyfield, 43, staging another comeback

EVANDER Holyfield: The Final Chapter

DALLAS—EVANDER HOLYFIELD IS 43. He hasn't fought in nearly two years, hasn't won in more than four, and hasn't been the heavyweight champ in six years.

So?

Here's the timeline he considers more relevant: His contract to box for Don King expired about two weeks ago, he was licensed to box in Texas last week and, on Thursday, he announced the start of his latest comeback bid, an Aug. 18 fight against journeyman Jeremy Bates.

"I actually believe I can whup anybody," Holyfield said at a news conference featuring local fighters on the undercard, but not his opponent. "I'm ready... Sure as I sit here today, I will be the undisputed heavyweight champion of the world."

Now working for his own company, Real Deal Events, his return to the ring after a 21-month absence is being hyped as "Holyfield V, The Final Chapter."

Holyfield quickly notes there are many pages in a chapter—and this one won't end until he gets his fifth heavyweight title. He's already the only person ever to claim it four times.

"If this was one fight, it'd be the final page," Holyfield said. "Whatever it takes to fulfill that chapter, that's what it is."

Looking fit, albeit wearing a suit, Holyfield proudly said he hasn't stopped working out during the longest layoff of his career. He even joked it made him angry to pay people to train him without having a payday in sight.

"I was thinking, 'I'm doing all this work for nothing,'" he said, pretending to cry.

The layoff was caused by several things, starting with a three-bout losing skid, also the longest of his career, and a 2-5-2 mark since 1999. His last loss, a unanimous decision against Larry Donald in November 2004, prompted New York officials to revoke his boxing license because of "diminished skills and poor performance." *AP*

Nadal survives, faces Agassi next

LONDON—RAFAEL NADAL LOOKED LIKE A FISH OUT OF WATER on Thursday against a Californian with a passion for surfing before a stirring fightback sealed a five-set victory and a third-round clash with old warhorse Andre Agassi.

Invincible on Europe's dusty red clay courts where he has carved out 60 successive victories, Nadal resembled a grasscourt novice at times against 237th-ranked Robert Kendrick but roared back to win 6-7 3-6 7-6 7-5 6-4 on Centre Court.

Agassi, in his 14th and final Wimbledon, had no such trouble against Italy's Andreas Seppi, using all his experience on the slick lawns in a 6-4 7-6 6-4 victory on court one.

Fellow American Andy Roddick, runner-up for the last two years, joined Agassi in the last 32, racing past Florian Mayer 6-4 6-1 6-2, as did Croatian fifth seed Ivan Ljubicic who beat Justin Gimelstob 6-3 7-6 7-5.

Lleyton Hewitt, champion in 2002, was bogged down at two sets all against South Korea's Hyung-Taik Lee when fading light forced the pair off court.

"That was a considerable improvement," said the 36-year-old Agassi, who will bring the curtain down on his glittering career after this year's US Open.

"It's been too long since I've just felt good and been in a place where I could enjoy what's going on out there. Today I was a lot closer to that," Agassi told reporters.

In the women's event, champion Venus Williams was on the verge of defeat to fellow American Lisa Raymond but recovered to win 6-7 7-5 6-2. Top seed Amelie Mauresmo was a comfortable 6-4 6-2 winner over Australia's Samantha Stosur.

While Agassi's progress was untroubled, second seed Nadal's limitations on grass were laid bare as he was given a torrid time by a player competing at only his third grand slam.

The 26-year-old American reeled off six points in a row to snatch the first set tiebreak from 1-4 down and then completely dominated the bemused Mallorcan in the second with his sharp serve and volley game.

Nadal received a warning for slow play at the start of the third set but where several claycourters might have been looking for the exit door, he refused to go away.

The double French Open champion sneaked a third-set tiebreak and although he came within two points of defeat in the fourth set he pegged back a tiring Kendrick.

A double fault cost Kendrick his serve at 2-3 in the fifth and a fist-pumping Nadal pounced on his third match point to complete only his second victory from a two-set deficit.

"He was serving unbelievable," said Nadal. "The more matches I play against big servers on this surface, the more I improve."

Williams, who has had an injury-plagued year, also found herself deep in trouble when she trailed Raymond 7-6 5-2.

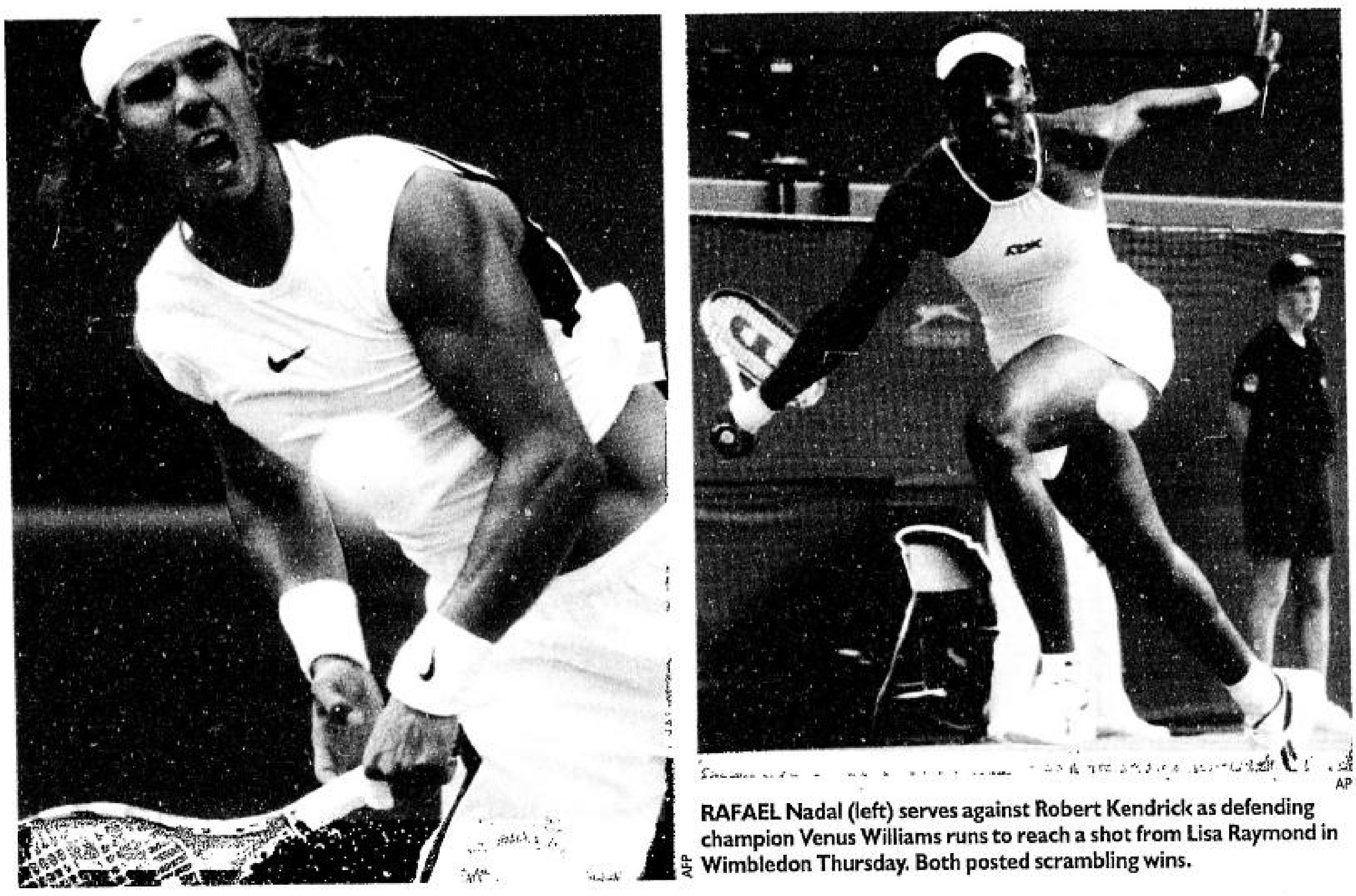
The sixth seed then unleashed a barrage of winners to take the next eight games on her way to setting up a third-round meeting with Serbia's Jelena Jankovic.

Fourth seed Maria Sharapova, waiting for a sequel to her 2004 Wim-bledon triumph, powered past American Ashley Harkleroad 6-2 6-2.

The 19-year-old Russian was dispatched to court two, graveyard of so many champions over the years, but suffered no alarms.

"You hear a lot more things out there but I think it's good, the fans can get to see you close up and personal," Sharapova told reporters.

Meanwhile, Filipino Cecil Mamiit and his partner American Kevin Kim yielded to Thai twins Sanchai and Sonchat Ratiwatana, 6-4, 3-6, 6-3, 6-7 (5), 8-6, in men's doubles play. *AP*


AFP AP

RAFAEL Nadal (left) serves against Robert Kendrick as defending champion Venus Williams runs to reach a shot from Lisa Raymond in Wimbledon Thursday. Both posted scrambling wins.

Raptors: Bargnani is no Tskitishvili

TORONTO—A DAY AFTER DRAFTING Andrea Bargnani with the No. 1 pick in the NBA draft, the Toronto Raptors said he won't end up like another European taken with a top pick from the same Italian team.

Maurizio Gherardini, Toronto's new assistant general manager and Barnagni's general manager with Benetton Treviso, said Thursday the 7-foot (2.14-meter) forward is no Nikoloz Tskitishvili, another 7-foot (2.14-meter) forward who never panned out after the Denver Nuggets selected him as the fifth pick in 2002.

"Tskitishvili came from the same family. I think the major difference, is that in Tskitishvili's case he was drafted simply on potential," Gherardini said at a press conference to introduce Bargnani.

"Nikloloz only played a few real minutes in real games. Andrea is a different story. He's played 81 games this season. In the playoffs he averaged over 32 minutes a game. He's played almost 1,800 minutes of real games on the toughest European courts. We're pretty much confident of the player he can be today."

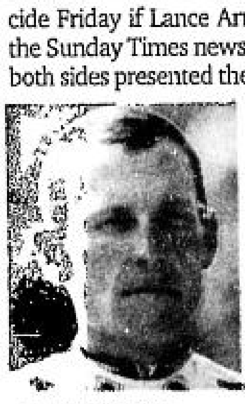
Tskitishvili averaged 6.6 points in his last year with Benetton and 2.9 points and 1.8 rebounds for four NBA teams. Denver fans never forgave recently fired general manager Kiki Vandeweghe for bypassing Amare Stoudemire, the eventual rookie of the year, for Tskitishvili in 2002.

Selected the "Top European Young Player of the Year," Bargnani recently helped lead Benetton to Italy's Lega A championship by averaging 12.1 points and 5.8 rebounds.

While Bargnani has been listed at 6-10 (2.09), he made a point Thursday of saying he's really 7 feet (2.14 meters). Colangelo joked that he didn't mind that the height was underestimated and incorrectly reported before the draft. *AP*

Court to rule on Armstrong libel lawsuit

LONDON—LONDON'S HIGH COURT WILL DECIDE Friday if Lance Armstrong's lawsuit against the Sunday Times newspaper will go to trial after both sides presented their arguments to a judge.


ARMSTRONG

The seven-time Tour de France champion is suing the British newspaper for printing a review of the book "LA Confidential, The Secrets of Lance Armstrong" in June 2004.

The article reprinted allegations that Armstrong had taken performance enhancing drugs. Armstrong has denied all doping allegations.

Armstrong's lawyers argue that by publishing the piece, the newspaper claimed he was a drug cheat. The newspaper says it is only bringing the suspicion of guilt into the public domain.

The court will rule on how the article would have been interpreted by readers, and whether the case should go to trial as scheduled on Nov. 6.

The book, written by Sunday Times sportswriter David Walsh and Pierre Ballester, a former writer for French sports paper L'Equipe, was published in France in French shortly before the 2004 Tour de France. The two authors and the writer of the article, Alan English, are also included in the lawsuit.

"Armstrong is presented as a paradigm example (of drug abuse in the sport), he is right at the heart of it," Armstrong's lawyer, Richard Spearman, said in London's High Court on Wednesday. "(The implication is) how could he have won these races in the way he has without having been doped liked everybody else?"

"There's no rule that you can't explore grounds of suspicion without straying into (alleging) guilt," the newspaper's lawyer, Andrew Caldecott, argued."

The French-language book relies in part on allegations by a former Armstrong masseuse, Emma O'Reilly. In it, she claims Armstrong once asked her to get rid of used syringes and give him makeup to conceal needle marks on his right arm. She acknowledged she didn't know what was in the syringes. *AP*

Ullrich, Basso out of Tour following doping scandal

JAN Ullrich won't get the chance to match his 1997 Tour triumph. REUTERS

STRASBOURG, FRANCE—FAVORITES Jan Ullrich, Ivan Basso and dozens of other cyclists were barred Friday from the Tour de France in a doping scandal, causing a massive upheaval on the eve of cycling's premier race.

Tour director Christian Prudhomme said team managers had agreed that riders implicated in a Spanish drug scandal would not be allowed in the race that starts Saturday.

Earlier, the T-Mobile team suspended Ullrich, fellow rider Oscar Sevilla and sporting director Rudi Pevenage because of the probe.

Basso and Ullrich—a five-time Tour runner-up who has spent most of his career in Lance Armstrong's shadow—were among 56 cyclists named in a Spanish probe as having contact with a doctor charged in connection with alleged doping, a leading Spanish radio station reported Thursday.

Cadena SER said the Civil Guard had decoded the names from notes taken by Dr. Eufemiano Fuentes. Other names included American Tyler Hamilton, Colombian Santiago Botero and Spaniards Francisco Mancebo, Joseba Beloki, Roberto Heras, Santi Perez and Jose Enrique Gutierrez, the station reported.

The radio station did not detail the kind of contact the cyclists had with Fuentes.

Two Spanish cycling teams— Astana-Wurth and Comunidad Valenciana—have been implicated. Comunidad Valenciana had its invitation to compete in the Tour rescinded, but the Court of Arbitration for Sport ruled Thursday that the Astana-Wurth team—which includes favorite Alexandre Vinokourov—could not be excluded from the race.

Spanish authorities say they have a list of riders suspected in a doping scandal but have not released specific names.

The head of the Spanish Cycling Federation, Fulgencio Sanchez, confirmed that the federation received a Civil Guard report that named more than 50 professional cyclists from a Spanish court probe. The report, he said, has also been sent to the International Cycling Union.

"We're going to look into it very carefully" to see if any action was required, Sanchez said. He declined to give more specific details from the report. *AP*

Lonard, 3 others share Buick lead

BOSTON—AUSTRALIAN PETER Lonard, fueled by four consecutive birdies, soared into a tie for the lead in the first round of the Buick Championship in Cromwell, Connecticut Thursday.

The 38-year-old fired a five-under-par 65 in soft, humid conditions at the TPC at River Highlands to set the pace with Americans Scott Verplank, Heath Slocum and Harrison Frazar.

Corey Pavin, winner of the 1995 US Open, opened with a flawless 66 to lie joint fifth with fellow Americans Darron Stiles, Todd Fischer and Ron Whittaker, Colombia's Camilo Villegas and Carl Pettersson of Sweden.

"It was one of those rounds where I hit a lot of greens, a lot of fairways and holed a couple of long putts," Lonard told reporters after mixing six birdies with a solitary bogey.

"I three-whacked (three-putted) the par-five 13th and then I hit a couple to two or three feet and made a couple of nice putts on the next few holes," he said of his four-birdie run from the 14th.Lonard claimed only two top-10 finishes in 12 Tour starts this season.

American Olin Browne, the 1998 champion, returned a 67 to finish level with 11 others including former winners Brent Geiberger (1999) and Woody Austin (2004). *Reuters*

SCOTT Verplank waves to the gallery as he leaves the 18th green. AP

Fog delays US Women's Open

NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND—THE FIRST round of the US Women's Open was postponed because of fog which rolled in off the Atlantic Ocean and lingered over the Newport Country Club into the afternoon on Thursday.

It was the first time since the 2003 Masters that the start of a major was postponed for one day. The US Golf Association could not remember that ever happening at the US Women's Open, or any of its championships.

The first round was rescheduled for Friday, followed by the second round on Saturday. Davis said there would be a 36-hole Sunday, the first time that's happened at the US Women's Open since 1990 at Atlanta Athletic Club, where Betsy King overcame an 11-shot deficit early on the last day to beat Patty Sheehan.

Michelle Wie was among those who were supposed to tee off on Thursday morning. She spent nearly 10 hours at Newport waiting to tee off. *AP*

Is Eala playing God in the PBA?

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

WAS PBA COMMISSIONER Noli Eala justified in slapping a whopping P507,000 fine on Red Bull (P400,000 on management, 100,000 on coach Yeng Guiao, 6,000 on cager Lordy Tugade and P1,000 on the team scorer) for staging an aborted walkout?

Former PBA legal counsel Butch Cleofe, who drafted the rules on walkouts with ex-PBA commissioner Rudy Salud, said Eala made a big blunder by imposing such a heavy fine, the same amount that would be assessed on an actual walkout.

Eala countered by declaring that a walkout is a walkout, consummated or not, and that he stands firm on his decision. Eala claimed Cleofe has been out of the PBA for a number of years now and is probably not aware of changes that were implemented after he left

* * *

Naturally, the first thing Cleofe did following this declaration was to secure the latest copy of the PBA constitution and by-laws, to find out if there had indeed been some amendments.

There was none. He called his governor friends to double-check and was told that there, indeed, was none; otherwise these would have been announced because the board had to ratify a proposed amendment before it could be passed.

* * *

"Why the difference in interpretation?" I asked Atty Butch.

"Semantics," he said. "The definition of a walkout in layman's terms is different from that in the PBA by-laws. In the latter, an action could only be called a walkout if there is forfeiture of the game. In the case of Red Bull, there was no forfeiture because the team returned to the hardcourt to finish the game.

In such a situation, imposing a basketball penalty (two technical fouls) is enough, Atty. Butch explained.

"Basically, Eala's decision is saying that, if there is no rule, I will exercise my discretion, and if there is a rule, I can disregard the rule and exercise my discretion. In short he is that all-powerful."

"But there is a rule on walkouts, I am sure of that because I drafted it," said Atty. Butch.

From the time of first commissioner Leo Prieto, the PBA has prided itself on strict adherence to rules. Now we will see if Eala has decided to play God, or if the present PBA will reconsider and adhere to the rules.

* * *

From what I heard, Red Bull is contesting the Eala sanction.

Incidentally, I think an apology is in order. PBA officials supervisor Perry Martinez texted to say that he never got my message. He claimed the number he texted to was no longer in use.

I didn't pursue my query anymore. It was no longer relevant.

* * *

Despite her immense popularity, wealth and stature (she's a presidential daughter, remember?), I found Kris Aquino to be down-to-earth and very engaging, when I got the chance to meet her up close recently. She's very transparent too. What you see is what you get.

Talking about married life, Kris said she had to give up six movies and a number of TV shows, for the sake of family which is her priority.

"James doesn't want me to do any more flicks or additional TV shows," said Kris who disclosed that she and James are a very religious couple.

It must be her influence on James.

They go to Mass more than once a week and attend Bible studies regularly.

* * *

"Pacific Storm," a book described by author Recah Trinidad as "an interpretative look into the relevance of boxing icon Manny Pacquiao to the Filipino," is off the press.

"I did this for its social significance," said the INQUIRER's veteran sports columnist who has written two other commissioned commercial books previously. He made it clear that the Pacquiao book is not a biographical sketch of the boxer, although it contains interesting and controversial highlights of the champ's life.

Among others, Recah touched on Pacman's extreme poverty during his childhood, exposed the truth about his lovechild Emmanuel (providing a photo of the mother, Manny and son together, during happier times), and the hangers on who take advantage of him.

There is also a section on Manny talking about himself and his career.

"Unlike fantasy movie heroes, Pacquiao is truly relevant. No borrowed courage, no rented heroics, no false sideburns," Recah wrote.

The book is available at all National Bookstores. It will be on sale at the Araneta Coliseum on Sunday, during the Mano-a-Mano boxing card.

England, Portugal ready

Top players out to prove their worth

BADEN-BADEN, GERMANY—The World Cup squads of England and Portugal are laden with stars that have yet to achieve at an international level.

They meet in the World Cup quarterfinals on Saturday with points to prove. As do their coaches.

At least Portugal has been earning praise from some for its play in Germany, unlike England, which has been branded as uninspiring and lucky.

"We couldn't have had a better preparation. We couldn't have had a better run of fixtures to get us to this stage," England defender Gary Neville said. "We're two games away from a World Cup final. Can we win two football matches? I think this team is capable of beating anybody."

This is Portugal's fourth World Cup and only the second time it's advanced past the first round. The only other time was 40 years ago.

Then, England beat Portugal, 2-1, in the semifinals on its way to its only World Cup triumph in 1966.

"I want to take the team as far as Eusebio did, which means a place in the semifinals," said Scolari, referring to one of Portugal's greatest strikers.

Since then, in major competitions, Portugal has always prevailed against England—winning, 1-0, at the 1986 World Cup, 3-2 at the 2000 European Championship and the 6-5 on penalties in the 2004 European Championship quarterfinals.

"Every time we go out of a competition at this stage, it's very painful. And to have it against Portugal twice at the quarterfinal stage would be very tough," England captain David Beckham said. "For us now, we can't think about what's gone on in the past, we have to look forward and believe we have the beating of this team."

Saturday's quarterfinal in Gelsenkirchen has another undercurrent—Luiz Felipe Scolari.

The Portuguese coach masterminded the Euro 2004 defeat of England. Two years before that, he led Brazil to a World Cup quarterfinal win over England.

And two months ago, he turned down the chance to become England manager and replace Sven-Goran Eriksson.

England's last win over Portugal was a 3-0 victory in an April 1998 friendly. The two have drawn twice in friendly matches since.

"England is a dangerous team with lots of experience," Portugal defender Nuno Valente said. "They haven't been playing pretty soccer, but they've been effective."

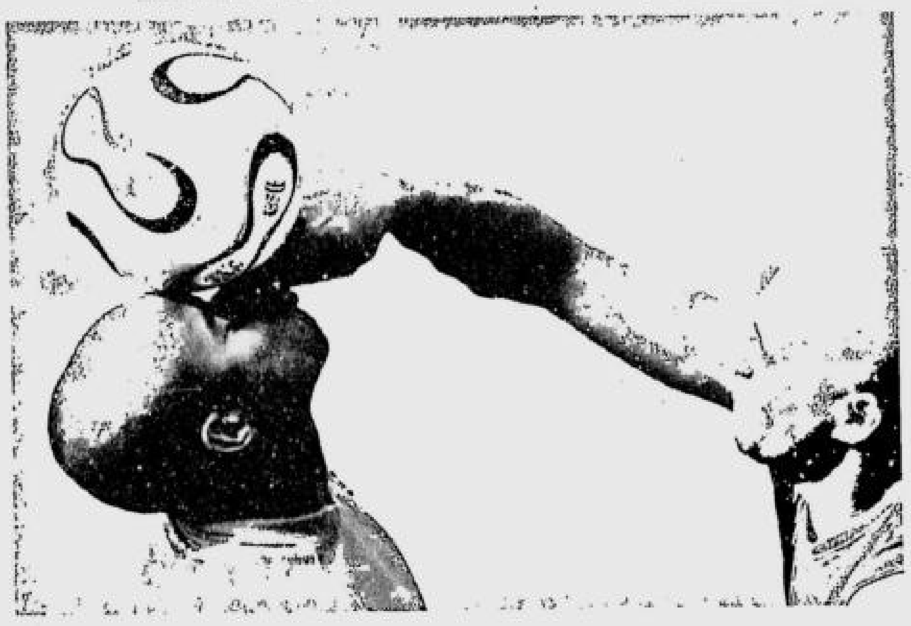
Pauleta said Saturday's match couldn't be compared to Euro 2004.

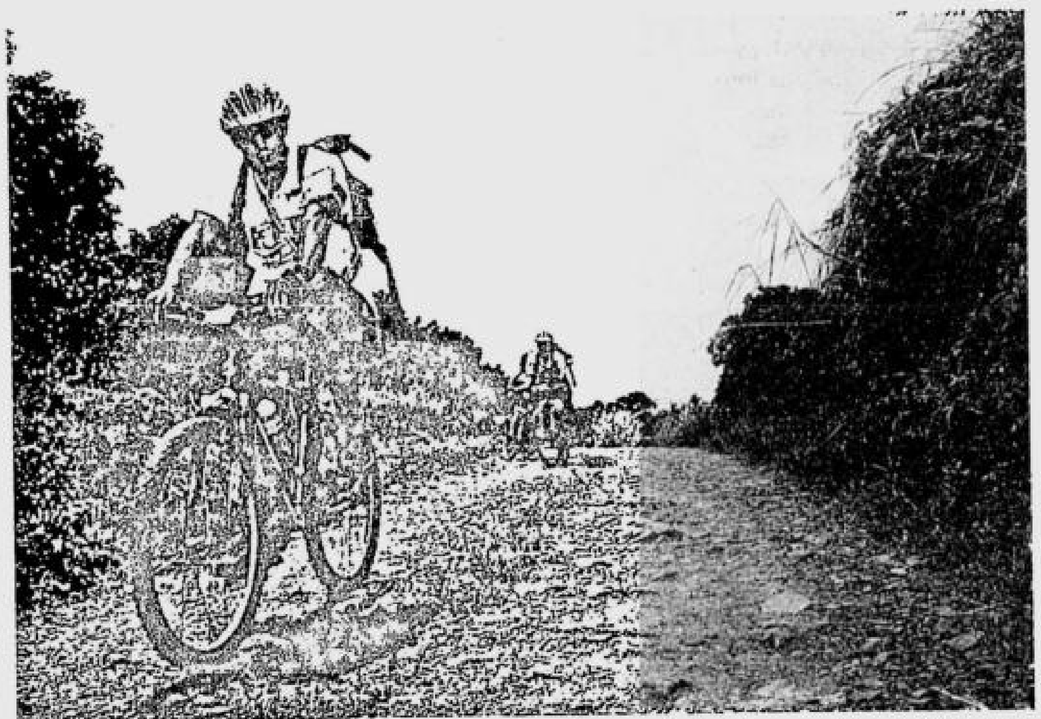
"It'll be a totally different game," he said. "England has got great world-class players. We have to be ready to meet one of the World Cup's best teams."

England has won three and drawn one since the World Cup started and hasn't impressed many.

England is expected to start Gary Neville at right back. *AP*

THE ATMOSPHERE is still light for teams that have yet to play their quarterfinal matches. Wayne Rooney (left, top photo) and David Beckham share a laugh during England's practice. In the Brazil camp, forward Robinho (left, right photo) jokes around with the ball with teammate Roberto Carlos. AFP, REUTERS





PARTICIPANTS bike through the rough terrains of Davao during the second leg last June 10.

Enduro adventure race assures safety of entries

PARTICIPANTS IN THE ENDURO SAN MIG Light Adventures Series will be subjected to pre-tournament skill tests to screen the abilities of every team and ensure safety in the event.

"To guarantee the safety of the racers, they will undergo skill tests days before the race to make sure they are physically and mentally equipped. Aside from that, we will have them insured," said race director Rene Guevarra.

A medical team will provide assistance to every participant.

Skill tests for both Elite and Novice participants are scheduled to take place on July 5 at the Customs Bar and Restaurant in Meralco Avenue, Ortigas.

"Our technical staff have gone through the route and have taken the race themselves to further assure the participants of their safety. We also have a medical team in every station that will provide first-aid procedures to the racers," said Guevarra.

With new and exciting tasks awaiting participants who will roam Metro Manila, organizers have required racers to be physically ready and mentally alert for the challenge also backed by Asian Spirit, NS Royal, Converse, Habagat and Cebu nightspots Cue Cafe, UH, Patio Escilla, Pump, Yo Latino, Kasadja, Ratsky, Vudu, Formo and Kahayag Cafe.

Some 200 racers are expected to take part in this annual adventure race that has grown bigger in its third year.

Interested parties may call (632) 414-1489 or log on to www.sanmiglight.com.ph.

The event is sponsored by San Mig Light, which, for years, has featured and supported the spirited sport of adventure racing.

Meanwhile, the Manila leg presented by San Mig Light will have a launching-cum-bar adventure today in Tomas Morato, Quezon City.

Participants in the bar adventure will start en masse and will have the liberty to decide which station to go first.

The media people and celebrities who will participate in this bar-to-bar race should form teams of three.

M'danao 3-on-3 elims get going

IT WILL BE A WIDE OPEN RACE in this year's Mindanao regional qualifying tournament of the 2006 Adidas Streetball Challenge slated to start today at the Gaisano Mall of Davao.

Barangay Maa, composed of former Ateneo de Davao University players, defeated Ateneo de Zamboanga, 17-16, to win the boys' division of the two-day tournament last year while University of Mindanao beat a Zamboanga selection, 18-16, to win the girls' championship.

Players from the two champion teams are no longer eligible to play in the 18-and below 3-on-3 tournament and both local organizer Vic Sai and tournament technical head Jay Salvador expect University of Mindanao, Cagayan De Oro, and Holy Child School to figure in the race for the boys' crown.

In the distaff side, University of Mindanao, Rizal Memorial College, and Ateneo de Davao have been installed as the top teams.

The draw was held Friday with both championship games set tomorrow, July 2.

All told, 36 boys' and 12 girls' teams are seeing action in the elimination tournament that will select Mindanao's representatives to the national finals of the 2006 Adidas Streetball Challenge scheduled Aug. 12-13 at the Mall of Asia together with the other regional champions from Metro Manila, Cebu and Luzon.

The national champion will qualify for the Adidas Asian Streetball Challenge championship in Guangzhou, China.

The Philippines is the defending Asian champion with San Beda College beating West Negros College in an all-Filipino finals at the Araneta Coliseum last year.

This year's tournament will only feature two categories for boys and girls unlike last year when there were competitions in the junior and midget divisions.

Age group triathlon set

THE THIRD LEG OF THE SPEEDO-National Age Group Triathlon 2006 blasts off next Saturday at the Baker Hall inside the University of the Philippines-Los Baños grounds near the slopes of Mt. Makiling.

More than 100 participants are seeing action in the kiddie 500-meter swim and 1.5-kilometer run duathlon side event, which is a clear sign of the growing popularity of the sport among Filipinos.

Organized by the UP-LB Trantados, the event follows earlier legs in Davao City and Danao in Cebu with the remaining legs set in Cagayan de Oro, Clark Field, Pampanga, and the final leg in Ayala-Alabang.

The Triathlon Association of the Philippines (TRAP), through its president, Tom Carrasco, is sanctioning the event, also being backed by PowerBar, David's Salon & Spa, Asian Center for Insulation Inc. and the Philippine Sports Commission.

The centerpiece event is made up of an 800-meter swim, 28-km bike and 6-km sprint race.

"We have been holding our own regular triathlon events here every year but this is the first time that we have made it into a leg in the Speedo-NAGT series," said Ian Castilla, president of the Trantados.

He added they have also included a relay race in the sprint distance.

Far Eastern U bets gain in JVC elite masters tourney

VETERAN INTERNATIONALIST LLOYD Escoses overpowered Christian Tentia, 21-7, 21-4, to lead the siege of the Far Eastern U bets into the last 16 of the elite masters division of the P1 million JVC Open Badminton Championships at PowerSmash Thursday.

Gaining the top ranking in the centerpiece division following the withdrawal of Kennevic Asuncion, Escoses hardly flexed his muscle in ousting Tentia to arrange a showdown with JLTC's Heildenberg Dimarucot, who beat Marlon Villarin, 21-17, 21-15, in the upper draw.

That includes 2003 champion Ian Piencenaves of Butuan Badminton Club, who struggled past JC Benepayo, 21-13, 18-21, 21-14, but stayed in the hunt for another crown in the event sponsored by JVC (Phils.), Inc. He faces Poppert Bernadas of UP Diliman, who disposed of Christopher Conde, 21-16, 21-10, in the next round.

Two other FEU mainstays advanced in the lower half of the draw with Wilson Frias beating Roy Callanta, 21-8, 21-11, and Christopher Flores booting out Sylvester Cosico, 21-10, 21-7.

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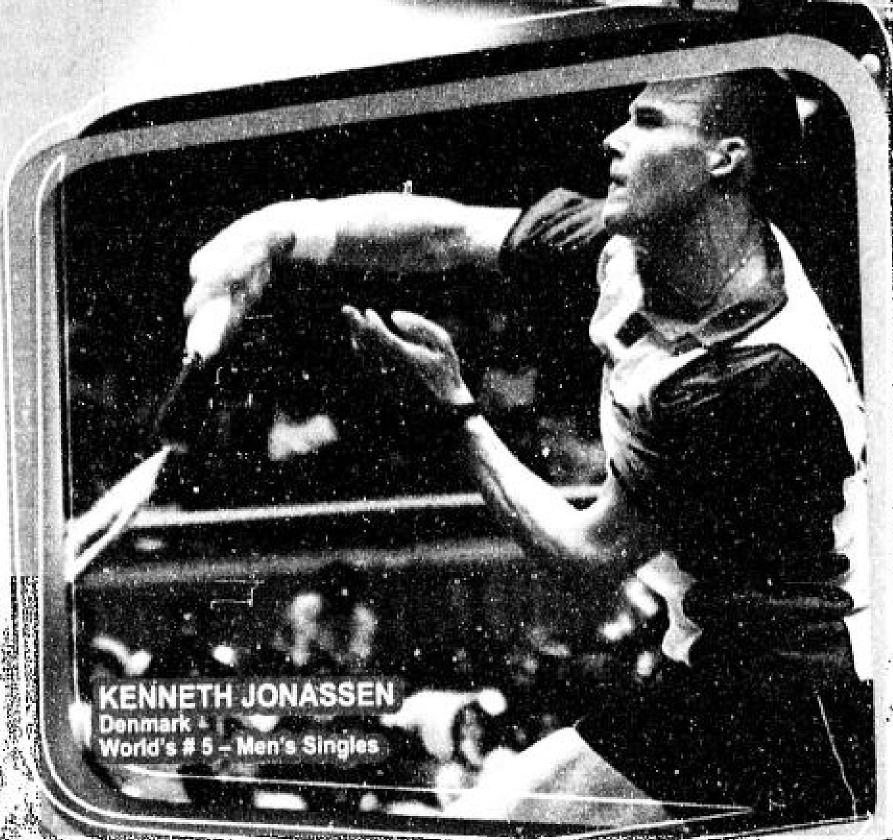
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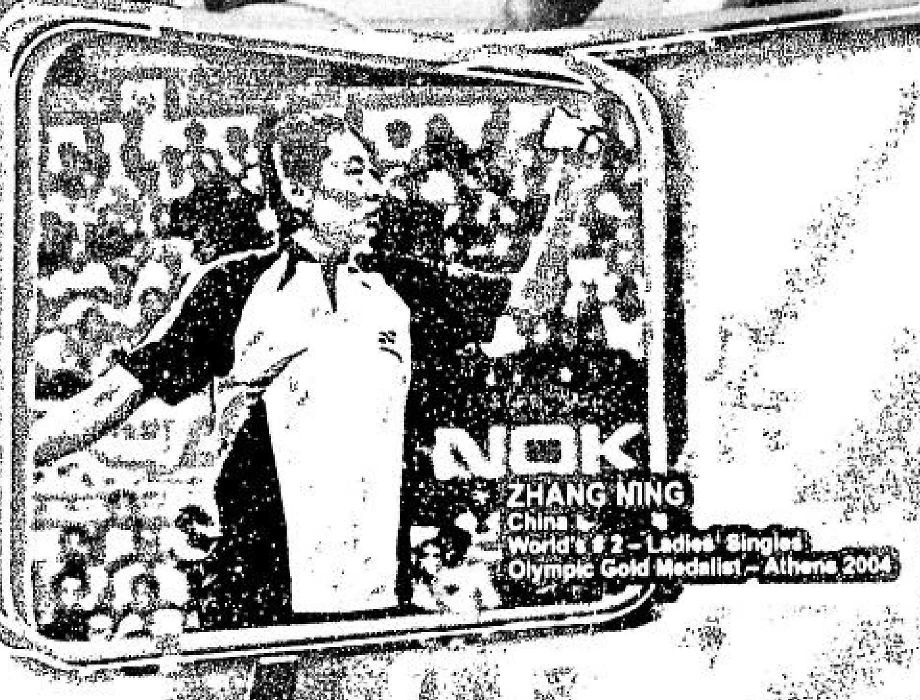
Denmark
World's # 5 – Men's Singles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How luminaries get their stars on Hollywood Walk of Fame

LOS ANGELES—IF IT weren't for two guys with a bunch of crushed granite, Hollywood might not have its iconic Walk of Fame.

The four-kilometer sidewalk monument, with its parade of pink-and-black stars bearing names of Hollywood luminaries, draws international media coverage for each new star placement and an endless line of camera-toting tourists from all over the world. They find their favorites and pose for pictures standing or kneeling atop stars like Marlon Brando and Michael Jackson—or any of 2,312 others.

Tinseltown magic

The Walk of Fame, almost all of it running along Hollywood Boulevard, is a tiny piece of Tinseltown magic anyone can experience.

The latest crop of honorees—including Sean "Diddy" Combs, Michelle Pfeiffer and Barbara Walters—were announced recently by honorary Hollywood Mayor Johnny Grant, who considers getting a star "equivalent to the Oscar."

"The Oscars have three months of hype," says Grant, 83, who also serves as chairman of the Walk of Fame committee. "We have hype year round."

These days, this glamorous symbol of Hollywood dreams-come-true is very much a business arrangement. Star-dedication ceremonies are usually timed to big movie openings or record releases, and famous folks—or their studios or sponsors—pay $15,000 to see their name in brass:

When it began, though, it was all about selling terrazzo.

In 1955, Garrie Thompson and Gordon McWilliams, proprietors of Anesco Construction Co., were looking for new clients at the same time the Hollywood Improvement Program was looking to spruce up the community.

The two men had an idea: Why not pay tribute to the movie business and improve the look of Hollywood Boulevard with mosaic stars bearing celebrities' names? And, of course, use their company to do the construction. They brought the Improvement Program a prototype: A brown terrazzo star emblazoned with John Wayne's name in shiny brass.

Permanent place

Community shot-callers loved it. They held meetings at the legendary Brown Derby restaurant to discuss which performers and industry giants might be worthy of a permanent place in Hollywood history.

Eventually, the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce approved 1,558 famous names from radio, recording, television and film—including Marilyn Monroe and William Fox, the founder of Fox Studios—to be honored in terrazzo perpetuity. None of the honorees was asked for a contribution. The work started in 1958, and the Walk of Fame was officially dedicated on Feb. 8, 1960.

By the late '60s, however, Hollywood Boulevard was glamorless—a haven for hookers and druggies. The Walk of Fame was dormant.

The star-granting committee still existed—with one representative from each of its categories: Film, television, radio, recording and live performance—but, no stars were awarded for 10 years, Grant says.

When he signed on to help resurrect the landmark in 1980, Grant, then a Hollywood Chamber of Commerce member and recent star recipient, established two new rules: Stars have to show up to get their star on the Walk of Fame—and they've got to help pay for the upkeep.

The original criteria for the awards stayed the same as it was in the '60s, Grant says. Candidates must have a "level of recognized professional achievement," at least five years of longevity in their field and have made charitable or civic contributions.

The nomination process helped make it a fan favorite, as anyone could nominate a celebrity for a star.

Virtually unchanged

The Walk of Fame committee, which Grant says has remained virtually unchanged since he joined 26 years ago, now reviews more than 200 applications a year. Grant and four other members—who are seated for life by the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce—meet each June and award about 20 stars annually. *AP*

GRANT (center) poses with, among others, Mickey Rooney, Red Buttons, Connie Stevens and Betty White.

Hilton's album mixes reggae, pop and hip-hop

HILTON. Something for everybody.

HONG KONG—Paris Hilton says her upcoming album will be a mix of reggae, pop and hip-hop, with the first single being a reggae song, "Stars Are Blind."

Hilton will do a remake of the Rod Stewart song, "Do You Think I'm Sexy?," she was quoted as saying in the Hong Kong magazine Prestige.

"The whole album has so much different music on it. I like all types of music. It's not like I only like pop or rock. I want to have something for everybody," Hilton said.

Shyness

Hilton said she wrote the lyrics to seven of her songs. The article didn't say how many songs are in the album. She said she had to overcome shyness to become a singer.

"I have always had a voice and I've always known I could sing, but I was too shy to let it come out. That is the hardest thing you can do—to sing in front of people. When I finally let go and did it, I realized it is what I am most talented at—and what I love to do the most," Hilton said.

Prestige reported the single, "Stars are Blind," will be released by Warner Records, followed by a full album later this year. *AP*

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10:30 1:40 4:50 8:00
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS
11:00 2:10 5:20 8:30
5 SUPERMAN RETURNS
12:00 3:10 6:20 9:30
6 SUPERMAN RETURNS
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7 LAKE HOUSE
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8 THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS 3
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9 SCARY MOVIE 4
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10 THE NUN
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1 SUPERMAN RETURNS 12:30 3:45 7:00 10:10
2 AN AMERICAN HAUNTING
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1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 THE NUN
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS
5 SCARY MOVIE 4

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

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2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
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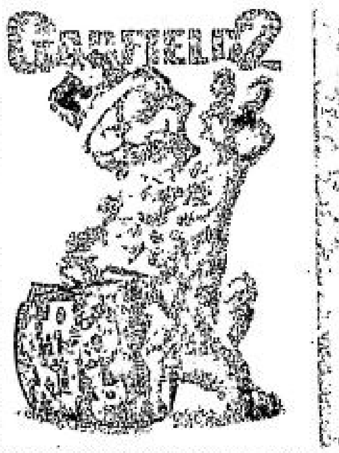

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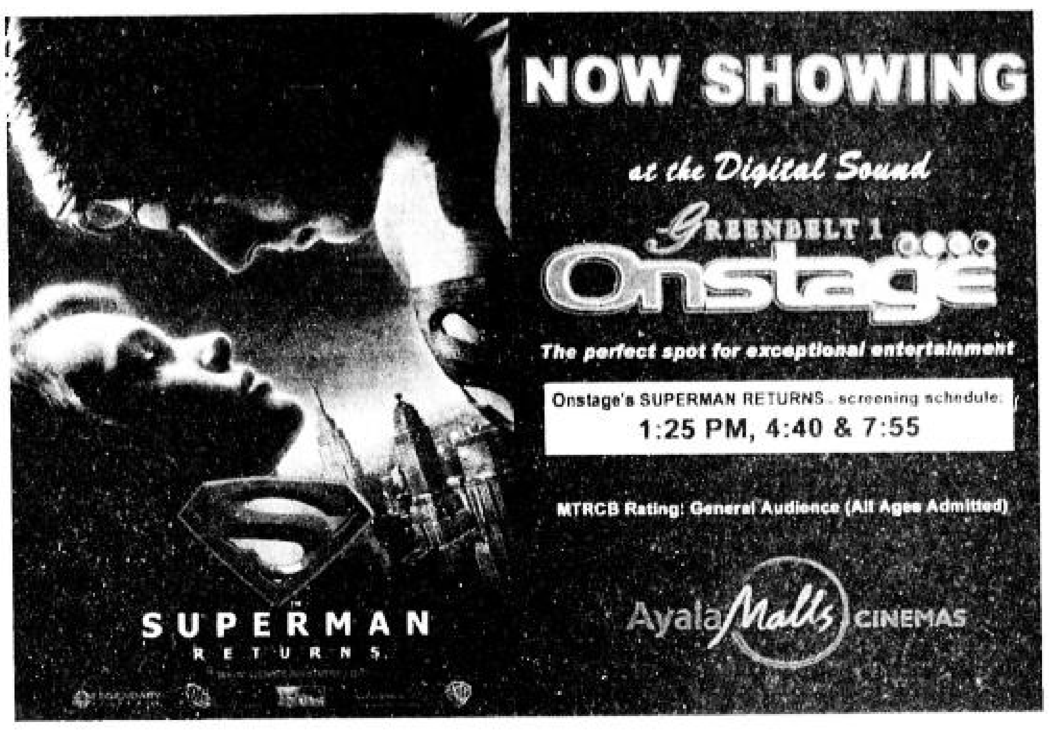

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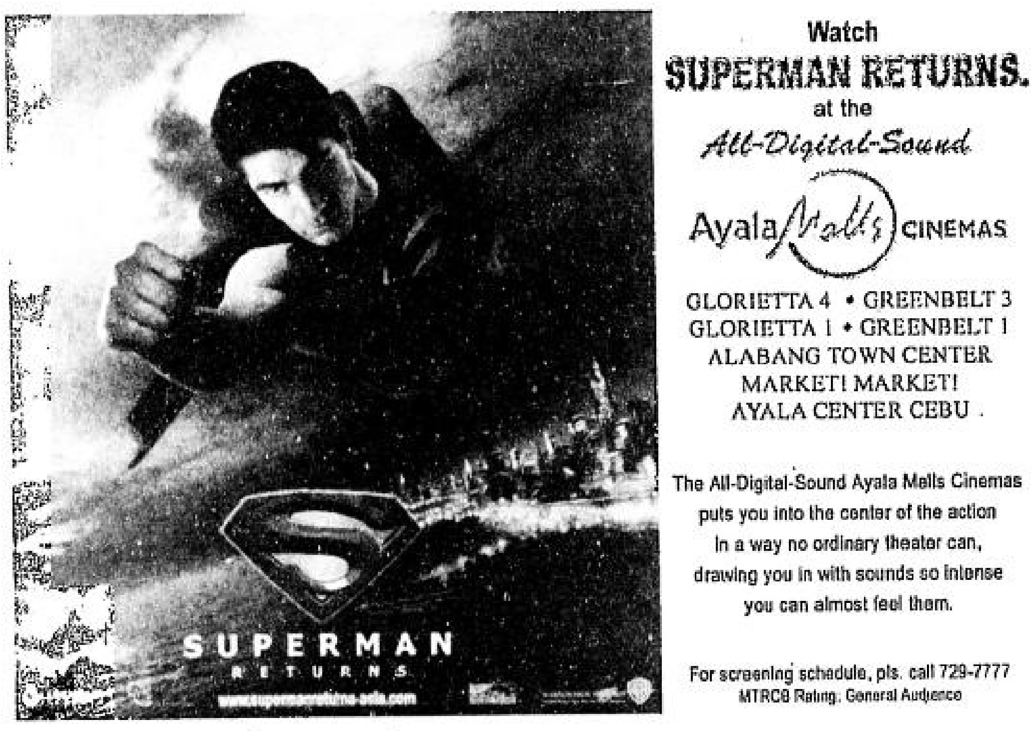

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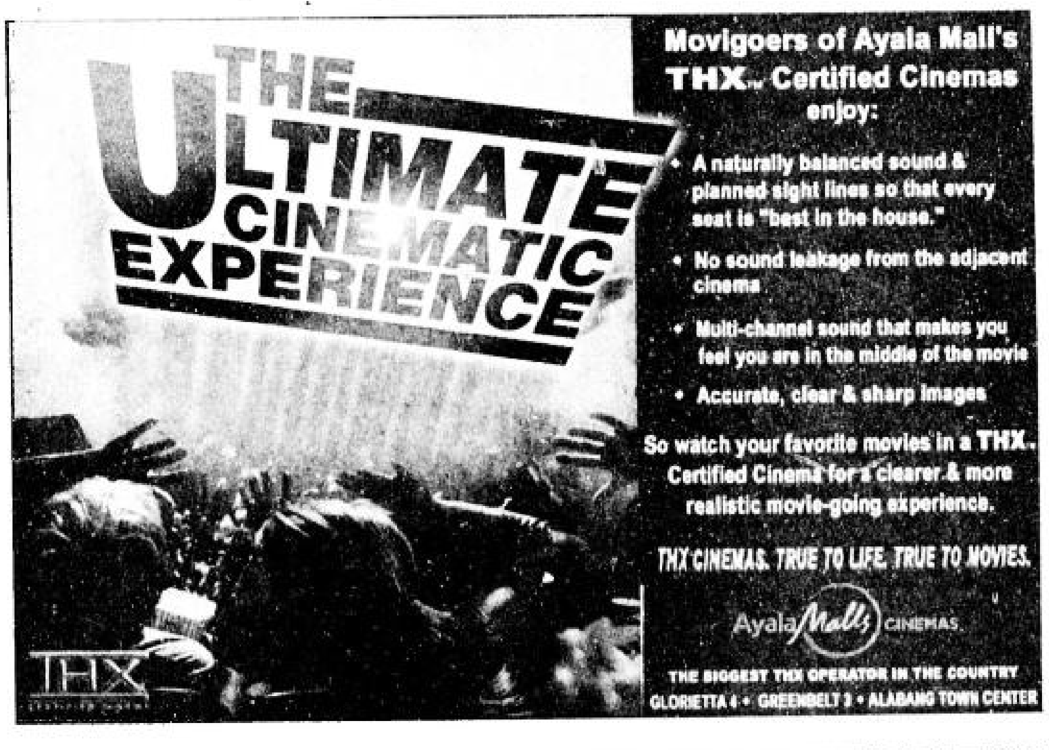

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Newcomers have fun juggling school and show biz

By Jocelyn Valle

MOST PEOPLE GET AN EDUCATION TO PREpare them for employment. Some quit school when they prematurely get a job. Others find ways to balance their studies and work—just like show biz newbies, Inah Revilla, Kiray Celis and Janna Pablo.

Inah, for instance, shares that she was only allowed to join the cast of "Kapag Tumibok ang Puso" because it was shot during the summer school break.

Daughter

Now that school has opened, the 16-year-old daughter of Bong Revilla and Lani Mercado is once again focused on her academic and extra-curricular activities.

Though she's acted in two movies (the first was shown 10 years ago), Inah says she'd rather go into production work like her aunt Andrea, a former child actress who now helps run the family-owned Imus Productions. Thus, she plans to take up a business course after she graduates from high school.

REVILLA. Plans to take up a business course.

Kiray, who's also in "Kapag Tumibok ang Puso" and on the kiddie gag show, "Goin' Bulilit," is on a home-study program so she can continue her schooling while pursuing a career in acting. She's given some 50 modules every three months, while a teacher regularly monitors her progress.

"*Mas OK po ngayon kasi hindi na ako masyadong napapagod,*" says the fifth grade pupil. "*Pero malungkot, kasi wala akong* classmates. *Mas masarap pa ring pumasok sa* regular school."

At age 10, Kiray already knows that it's one of the sacrifices she has to make to reach her goals: To succeed in comedy *and* stay long in the biz.

Acting gigs

Janna, who's on Channel 2's teen series, "Let's Go," has opted to take fewer units at the University of Santo Tomas, where she's a second year Behavioral Science sophomore, so she can devote more time to acting.

Sticking to a busy schedule is a challenge, she says. "But, I know that my family, friends and co-actors will help me stay focused. I study while I wait for my scenes to be taped."

Dylan keeps fans guessing

NEW YORK—BOB DYLAN HAS announced no plans for his 65th birthday, but around the world—and in the hometown he couldn't wait to escape—the musician who has insistently resisted labels will be celebrated as the voice of a generation.

DYLAN. Voice of a generation.

Dylan's spokesman, Elliott Mintz, responded to questions about Dylan's birthday and touring plans by saying only that he had passed along the inquiry.

Compilation

But, a new compilation book of Dylan's interviews has been published for the occasion, radio stations from Norway to Australia will air salutes, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame has mounted a special exhibit, and in his hometown of Hibbing, Minnesota, residents are baking cakes in hopes he may return.

The singer-songwriter, who is also an author, filmmaker, actor and, most recently, radio disc-jockey, has changed his name, religion and musical style along the way. He has sometimes shocked his fans, but always kept them guessing, while writing culture-changing songs like "Blowin' in the Wind" and "Like a Rolling Stone."

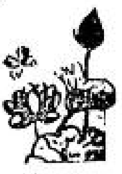
Retirement age

At retirement age, with hundreds of songs and nearly 50 albums behind him, he is still constantly touring, with a European swing about to begin.

"I don't see why you can't last as long as you want to last," he is quoted as saying in "Bob Dylan, The Essential Interviews," edited by Jonathan Cott. "All I can do is be me—whoever that is," he says.

The book traces Dylan's progress—from a kid besotted with 1950s rock 'n' roll to a young folkie who gave voice to the anti-war, anti-racism youth movement of the 1960s. ...*Reuters*

LOTUS POND



R. Valencia and S. Bismark

Ocean

WHEN WE LOOK AT the ocean, its breadth, width and depth often overwhelm us. In the Vedas, the ocean is always used in significant analogies. Here are some of them:

Ocean of Material Existence. Material existence is compared to an ocean because of the difficulties and sufferings people undergo.

Problems

When a person's problems overwhelm him, it's like getting caught by a huge wave that leaves him battered and gasping for breath. He can't cling to other people for safety because they themselves are drowning. And he can't easily swim out of this situation because he knows it's beyond his strength.

A wise person acknowledges the assistance he needs from someone who transcends material nature. So, when he prays to the Supreme Being for help, God saves him from drowning.

Existence

Ocean of Happiness. Spiritual existence is likened to swimming in an ocean of happiness. In yoga, a person is united with the Supreme Being in love and purpose—he tastes the unlimited nectar of bliss. While the material ocean is salty, the spiritual ocean is sweet.

Material pleasures are temporary and fleeting. But, spiritual pleasure and happiness are unlimited, imperishable and lasting. You can bring them with you even beyond death.

Loving service

Ocean of Mercy. A self-realized person who is engaged in the loving service of the Supreme constantly relishes this spiritual nectar. The joy he experiences is so overwhelming that he desires to share it with others. Externally, he may be surrounded by material difficulties, but his heart overflows with love.

He may be exposed to rejection and ridicule, but he continues to work for the spiritual upliftment of living entities regardless of faith, race or social status. A self-realized person is an ocean of mercy who can lead us to the ocean of true happiness, peace and love!

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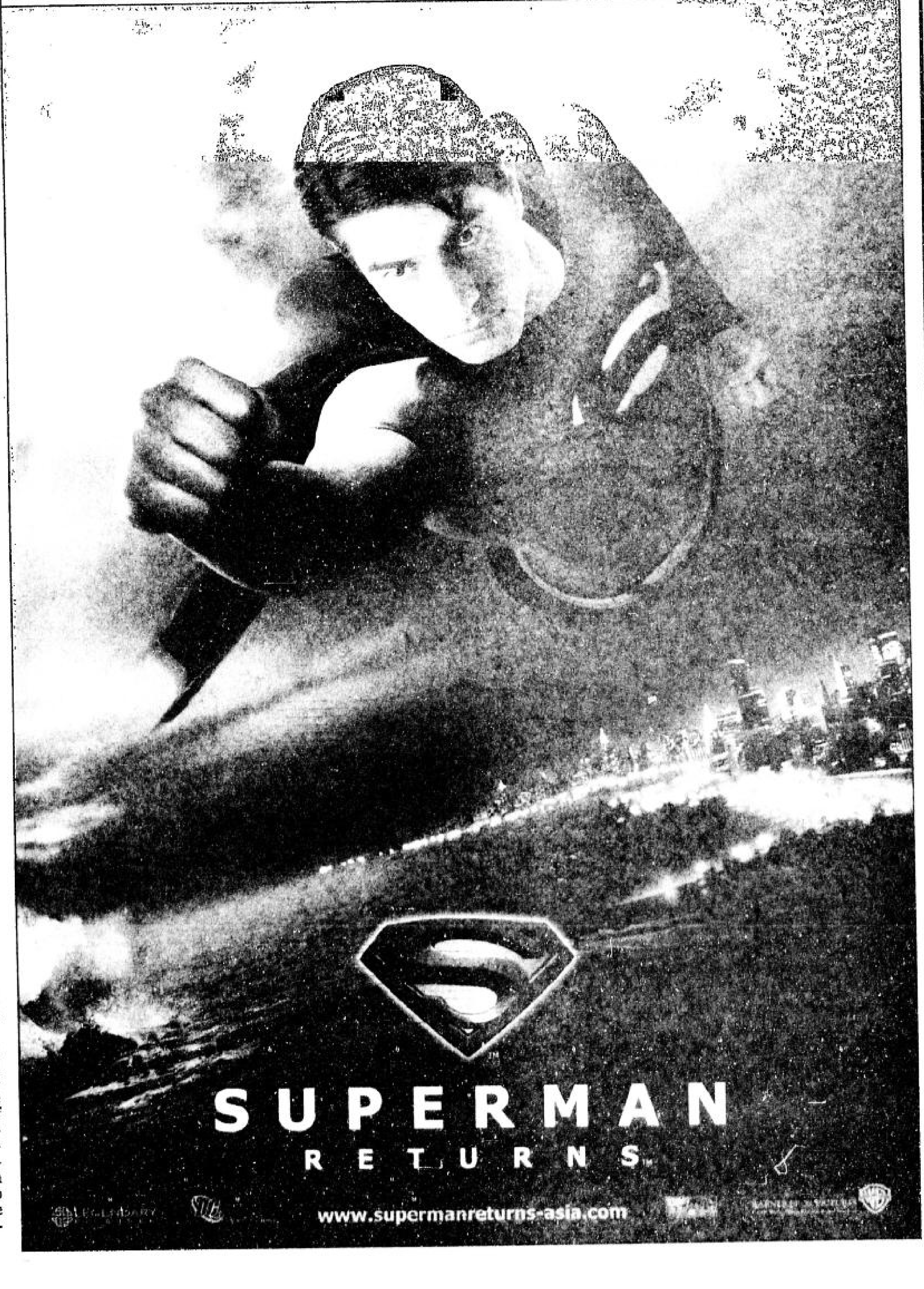

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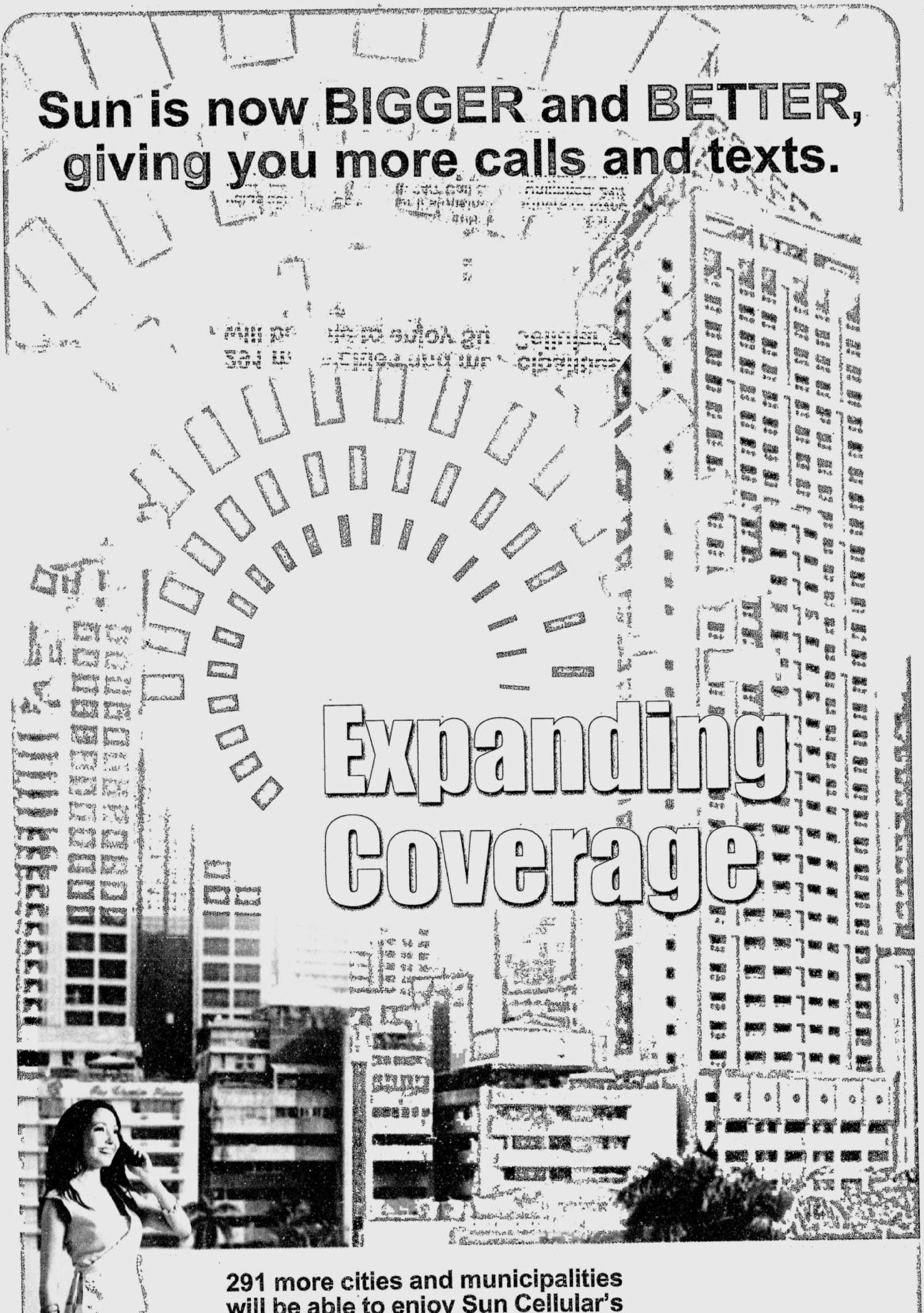

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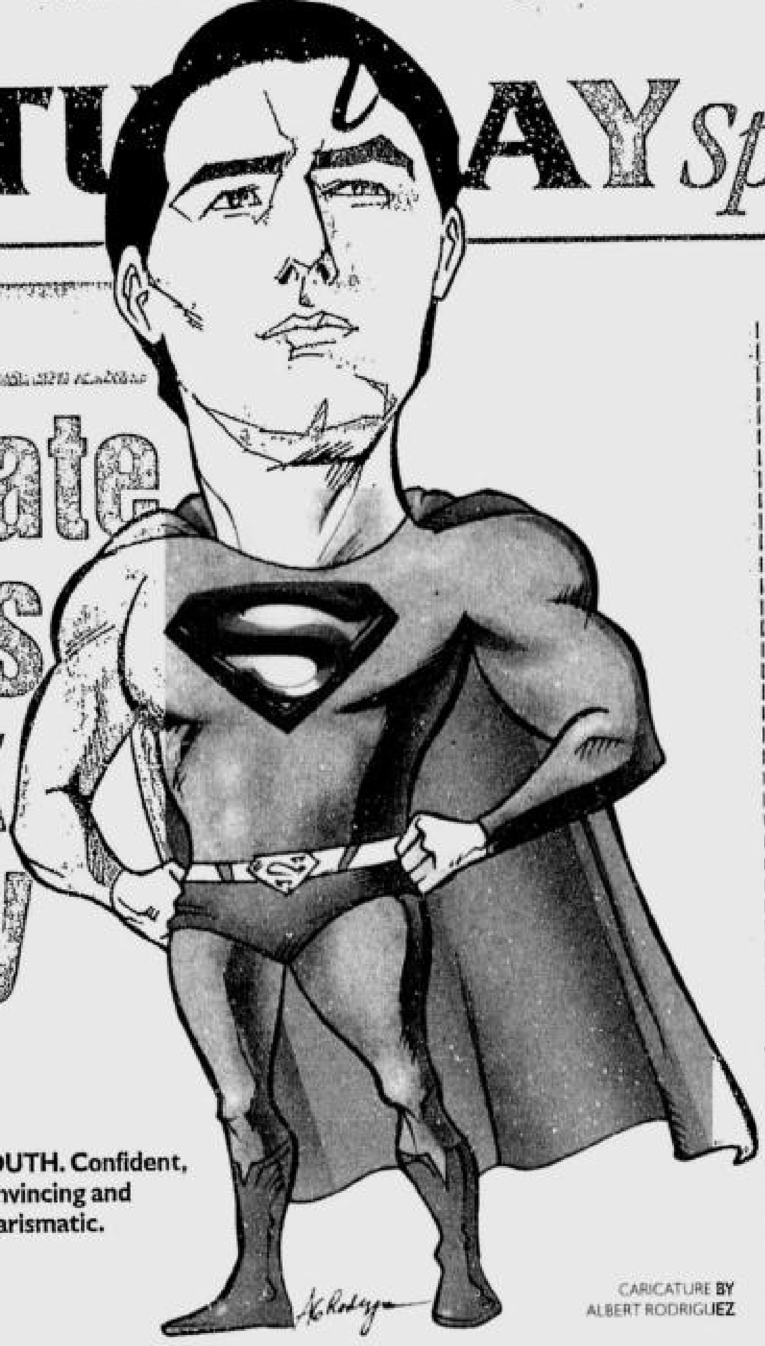
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ROUTH. Confident, convincing and charismatic.

By Rito P. Asilo

"Superman Returns"

D: Bryan Singer
S: Brandon Routh, Kevin Spacey, Kate Bosworth, Marlon Brando, James Marsden, Eva Marie Saint

IN BRYAN SINGER'S SPECtacular homage to Christopher Reeve, the world's ultimate outsider finally understands his *raison d'etre*, which has eluded him all his earthy life.

This facet to Superman's personality may not have been purposefully glossed over in Richard Donner's 1978 and 1980 versions, but those movies merely supplied the requisite details to decipher the mythical origins of earth's mightiest superhero.

Crafted in inspired reverence and loving deference to Donner's films, Singer's hauntingly earnest yet vastly entertaining update follows the events of "Superman II" (bypassing the third and fourth installments of the Alexander Salkind franchise) and ensconces existential issues—minus the heavy hand—at the core of the movie's story to dig deep into the heart and soul of Clark Kent (Brandon Routh). As a result, the film packs as much emotional wallop as its breathtaking, adrenaline-pumped action scenes!

Five years after he abandons earth to look for remnants of Krypton, his doomed home planet, Kal-El *aka* Superman, in the guise of bumbling Daily Planet reporter Clark Kent, returns to chaotic Metropolis—and to an indifferent Lois Lane (Kate Bosworth), who has just won a Pulitzer Prize for writing a passionate article about the irrelevance and dispensability of superheroes like Superman.

To make matters worse, Lois—still spelling-challenged, and more world-weary than ever—now has two other special males in her life: A five-year-old asthmatic son, Jason (Tristan Leabu), and a dashing fiancé, Richard (James Marsden), whom she resolutely refuses to marry.

As if these weren't enough, Superman's arch nemesis, Lex Luthor (Kevin Spacey), has found a way to exact his revenge (he has kryptonite up his nasty sleeve) while plotting his nefarious scheme for world domination.

Luthor's scenes, however, occasionally slow down the narrative flow. In cogently staged fight and flight sequences, the Man of Steel valiantly battles his bald foe and other forces of

SUPERB/ A3-2

Two for the Cinemalaya filmfest

By Nestor U. Torre

WITH THE SECOND CINEmalaya digital film festival set to open on July 17 at the CCP, the 2006 competition's fresh batch of new filmmakers is doing its best to measure up to the high standard set last year by the alternative filmfest's first edition.

Two of the promising new films to be unveiled at the festival are "Tulad ng Dati" by Michael Sandejas, and "Donsol" by Adolf Alix Jr.

AQUINO. Topbills Adolf Alix Jr.'s "Donsol."

Semi-biographical

"Tulad ng Dati" is a unique film because it's a semi-biographical movie about the legendary rock band, The Dawn. Director Sandejas describes his first feature as an alternate reality musical-drama—a fictional story about real people.

The film follows the lives and careers of the members of The Dawn through the many ups and downs of the band's 20 years in the music industry.

The film's cast includes the members of The Dawn (Jett Pangan, JB Leonor, Francis Reyes and Buddy Zabala) playing themselves, and Ping Medina, Agot Isidro and Mylene Dizon.

We believe that Sandejas has scored a coup by getting the members of The Dawn to portray themselves. Their musical numbers and the way the film interweaves reality and memory should be truly special. We just hope that the bandmates will also be up to the movie's thespic challenge.

TWO/ A3-2

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Francis M looks for the X-factor

By Jocelyn Valle

BY NOW, MOST EVERYBODY knows that Ryan Cayabyab, Pilita Corrales and Francis Magalona make up "Philippine Idol's" panel of judges. The show will premiere on July 29 on ABC-5, which won the right to replicate the hugely popular "American Idol" in this country.

But, did you know that Francis missed the group's first get-together—in a photo shoot—because, at the time, he was still uncertain if he could join the show?

Magalona explains: "I had to ask permission from the producers of 'Eat Bulaga,' This job (as a judge) is obviously not a walk in the park. It's not easy to tell people that they're chasing after the wrong dream." What clinched the deal was his wife Pia's advice.

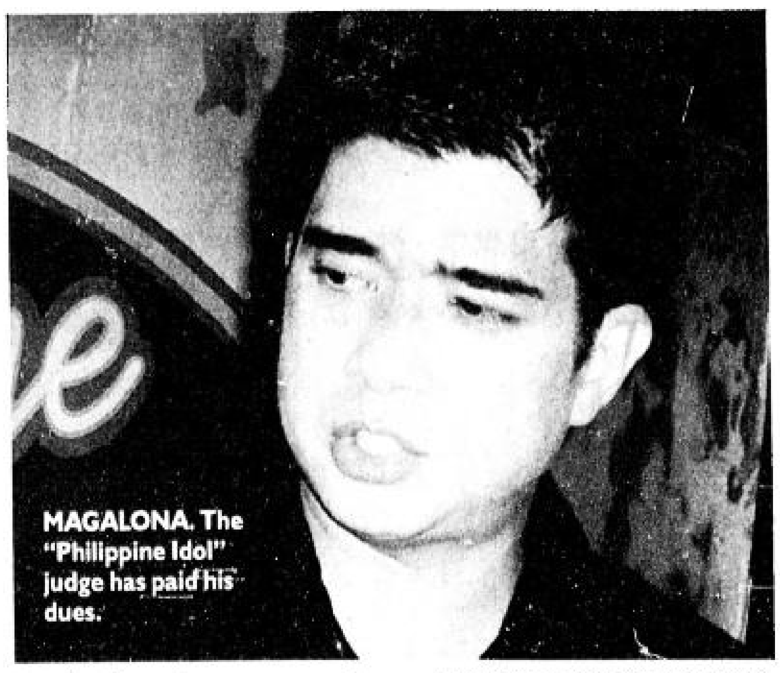
Honor

"She said it would be good for me, and I'd be a hypocrite to say I wasn't honored to have been chosen. It's an honor to sit beside a legend like Mr. C (Ryan Cayabyab) and an institution like *Tita* Pilita (Corrales)," he adds. "But, I don't want people to be deceived by how young I look, because I'm already 41 years old. *Namuhunan na ako ng mahigit* two decades *sa industriyang ito.*"

Qualifications

Francis directs his last statement at people who question his qualifications. Being the son of local show biz icons, Pancho Magalona and Tita Duran, may have been his passport to show business in the '80s *via* "Bagets 2," but it was his exceptional skill at rapping and rhyming that made him a Philippine idol in his own right—with a string of hit albums that spawned popular tunes like "Mga Kababayan" and "Man from Manila."

Francis shares that he's not easily impressed with a singer's soaring voice and belting ability. As a judge on "Philippine Idol," he's looking for someone who possesses the whole package—and the X-factor.


MAGALONA. The "Philippine Idol" judge has paid his dues.

"That's something that will make people willingly wait in line just to watch you perform," he shares.

One thing's sure, Francis won't let himself get carried away: "I don't want to get emotionally attached to any contestant," he avers. "Many of them have said they are afraid of me—and I want it to stay that way!"

Down with clones and copycats

By Behn Cervantes

EVERYTIME A FILIPINO TALENT mimics a foreign singer, I wince. This is especially true when the performer copies the foreign singer down to his last ad-lib. He "xeroxes" the original singer's tempo and temperament. He may be very musical and possesses a keen ear for music and rhythm—but, what's wrong with *this* picture?

Industry

Obviously, the singer has talent that can help him make a mark in the industry. Yet, he's willing to be somebody's mere copy. If he only concentrates on originality of style, he will stand out in an industry full of mere copycats.

We have so many of them—a number boosted further by shows that aim to discover local counterparts of the latest hitmakers. Sometimes, not satisfied with photocopying singing styles, the wannabes even ape foreign singers' outfits!

In other parts of the world, a sense of propriety would deter such brazen cloning practices, because when a person is referred to as a copycat, the statement is an insult.

PRESLEY. Still mimicked 29 years after his death.

While taking a cab one day, I heard a young and talented local singer's cover version of an American song on the radio, with the copycat imitating every musical phrase and ad-lib. In the States, he may well have been sued for such a deed. Here, however, the misguided talent is applauded and, in fact, encouraged.

While listening to the "expert" cloning, I groaned. The cab driver asked me why. I told him, "*Sayang, 'di ba? Ang ganda ng boses—bakit siya nangongopya?*" The driver agreed.

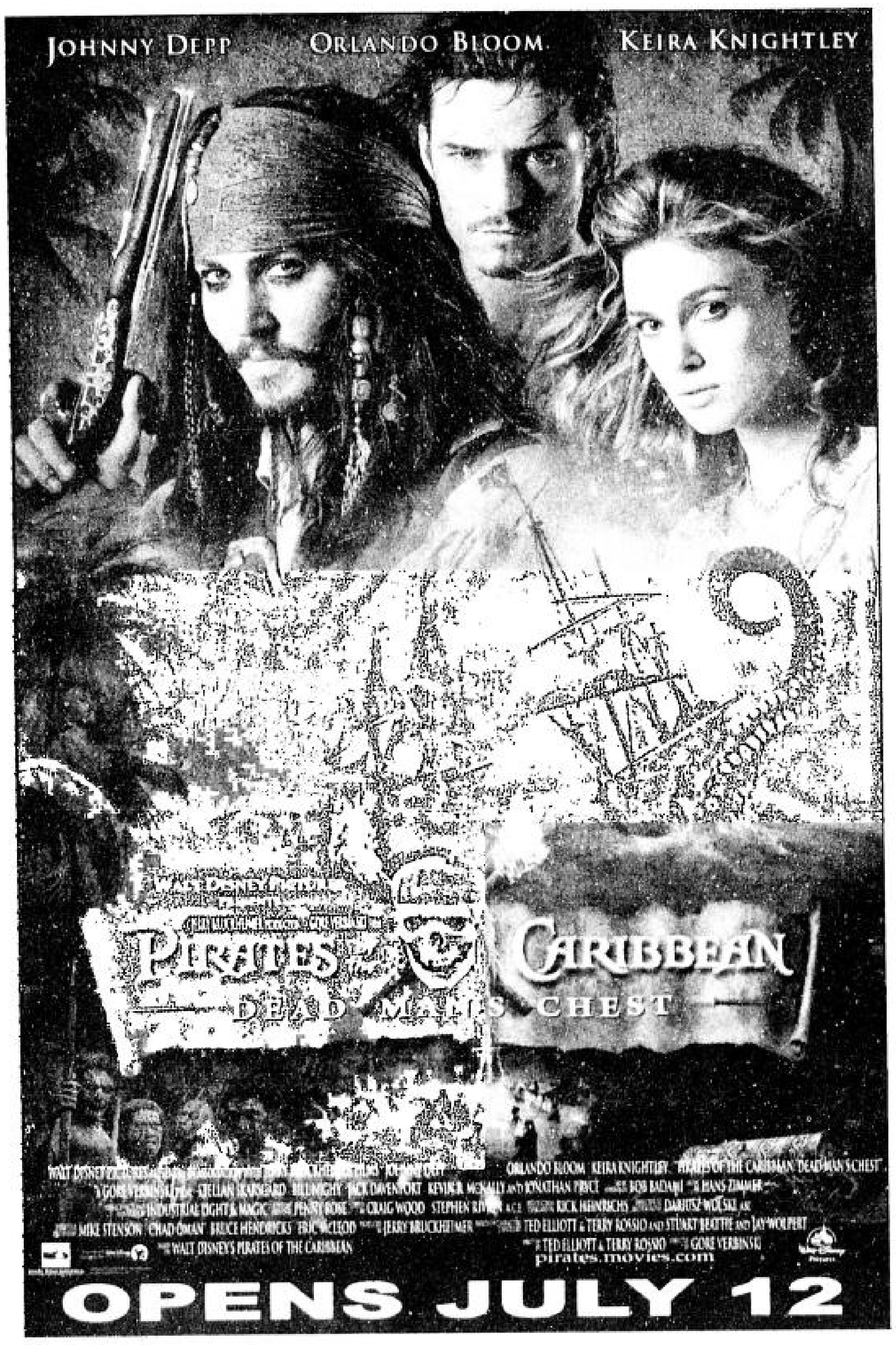
Relieved that this lack of originality is not acceptable to more people these days, I asked the driver how he thought we could possibly establish our own styles and genres when our young talents continually ape the latest musical sensation. Some people still sing *ala* Elvis Presley! Alas, he too was stumped.

Only when we produce *the* definitive Filipino singer will the Philippines be taken seriously by the rest of the world.

Borrowed aspects

For this reason, I wish "Philippine Idol" emphasizes the *Pinoy* element rather than borrowed aspects.

There is no doubt that we are a musical people. We have an innate sense of music, grace and rhythm. But, until we allow these qualities to come to full fruition, we will continue to be trapped by the misguided notion of cloning and we won't go as far as we should in world music.



Superb update humanizes . . .

From page A3-1

destruction—he even finds time to save lives in Manila! (What say you, Darna and Captain Barbell?)

This time, the stakes are higher—and the risks closer to home: As Singer and his scriptwriters skillfully maneuver the plot's development, Superman may no longer be as "solitary" as he always thought he was! Along the way, the film conveniently pulls a "little" surprise that provokes as much as it pleases. But, we won't spoil this "small" detail for you...

More than the stark images, jolting visual poetry and sci-fi magic that Singer conjures up on the silver screen, Superman's personal issues synergize an old tale with a fresh perspective—with no little help from Routh, Bosworth, Spacey, Parker Posey (as the naughty but nice Kitty), Eva Marie Saint (as Martha Kent) and Marlon Brando, in a stirring cameo as Jor-El, the Man of Steel's biological father.

Confident, convincing and charismatic as Superman and endearingly geeky as Clark, the chiseled Routh is perfectly cast as the god-like superhero, whose lonely quest for identity and elusive love eventually leads him to a stark realization that turns impatience into prudence and wisdom. Clark later learns that Jor-El's enigmatic line, "The son becomes the father, and the father becomes the son," is more than just poetic paternal twaddle.

In his adoptive, intolerant world, this (super) man manages to find redemption by accepting his destiny. We may not have his power of flight, super strength and X-ray vision, but the universality of his struggles—and triumphs—can also be ours.

A live-action adaptation from the popular Manga and hit anime series.
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INITIAL D
an Andrew Lau Alan Mak film
Shawn Yue
Jay Chou
Edison Chen
Anne Suzuki
Chapman To
Jordan Chan
Anthony Wong
OPENS JULY 12

Two for the Cinemalaya . . .

From page A3-1

For its part, "Donsol" uses the *butanding* (whale shark) in Donsol, Sorsogon, as an objective correlative for and mute witness to its characters' physical suffering, emotional conflicts and spiritual healing.

Angel Aquino plays Teresa, a breast cancer survivor who returns to Donsol to deal with a traumatic experience, and falls in love with Daniel, a BIO (Butanding Interaction Officer) portrayed by Sid Lucero.

Unique focus

Aside from its unique focus on the *butanding*, Alix's film is distinguished by its dramatization of the subject of breast cancer.

Other important roles are played by Cherie Gil, Jaclyn Jose, Bembol Roco, Mark Gil and Simon Ibarra.

First film

This is Alix's first film as director, but the young film artist has made a name for himself as a screenwriter. He was only in his teens when his full-length screenplay, "Ada," won first prize in the Film Development Foundation's nationwide scriptwriting competition. He also co-wrote the award-winning "Mga Munting Tinig."

We trust that both Mike Sandejas and Adolf Alix Jr. will benefit from the showcase and support that the Cinemalaya festival is providing for their first films.

To help them and the other new filmmakers featured this year make their mark, we urge you to go out of your way to catch their digital movies at the CCP from July 17 to 23.

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GUINTO and Umali (seated, center) with employees of Kitaro-Filinvest.

Food and friendship

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

GOOD FRIENDS RAE Aranda-Guinto and Evelyn Dava-Umali, now retired from their respective jobs, got together when they were invited to put up a branch of Kitaro on Filinvest ave. corner Alabang-Zapote.

For both women, the restaurant's proximity to their homes is an opportunity to practice their managerial and marketing skills once again.

Treats

The place can accommodate 70 guests. It even delivers. Some of their tasty treats: The California Party Tray comes in three sizes, while the Samurai Feast contains 26 items. The bar offers *sushi, sashimi* and *maki*.

Rae and Evelyn are comfortable working together. Evelyn hails from San Jose, Antique. She has four children: Bambi, Ian, Olam and Allen. Rae was raised in Manila. She has three children: Ramon, Paola and Maqui.

Productive

The friendship of these two ladies spans three decades. In their senior years, they promise to be physically-fit and productive. Call 771-2249, or text 0917 842-4300.

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How Sara Lee changed the color of my life by making my dream cars a reality!

Emmy Samson, Sara Lee's top IBM, poses with his cars.

In February 1993, Emmy Samson of EDSA branch dropped his dealership for other more established companies to join Sara Lee Direct Selling.

"I realized that promoting Sara Lee products would be easy because they are all quality products, branded and saleable," he says. "I realized too that the incentives and income opportunity are more generous."

Emmy has never regretted his decision. Not only is he the company's top independent business manager (IBM) for 2006, but he has also given in to his passion: cars.

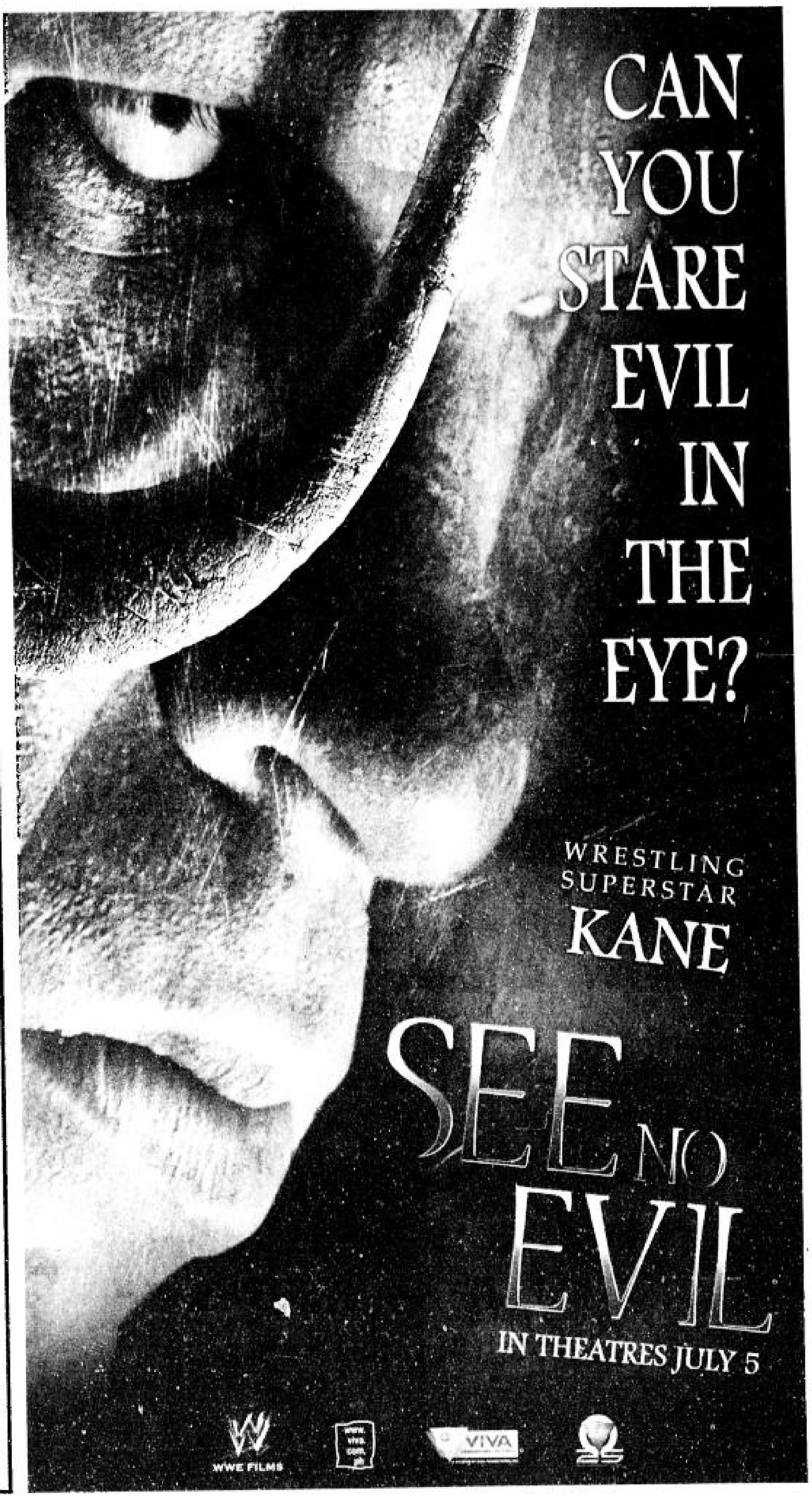
Sara Lee's VIP or Vehicle Incentive Program, is one of the company's many attractive perks. And why not? In today's busy world, transportation is a necessity. Hence, Emmy worked hard to qualify for the program. Now, Emmy and his family own the latest car models in the market with cutting-edge features for safe, pleasurable rides. "Whether it's for a short ride or a long trip," says Emmy, "there is an available car in the garage anytime.

He was also able to build a comfortable home for his family and gets to travel abroad every year.

"It has always been my goal to provide my family with life's luxuries," he admits. "I also believe in nurturing our passions."

People like Emmy Samson are lucky enough to be living the life they've dreamt of. In fact, anyone can, as long as he works hard and chooses a company that generously rewards its workers' dedication. For Emmy, that company is Sara Lee Direct Selling.

Sara Lee Direct Selling Philippines, Inc. is the authorized distributor of prestigious brands that include Playtex, Hanes, Champion, Wonderbra, Just My Size, Girls' Attitudes, Colour Collection, Beauty Touch, Ivana, George On Ice, VS. Versus, Nutrimetics, and Zwitsal. Sara Lee Direct Selling Philippines, Inc. is also known as Fuller Cosmetics in Latin America and Nutrimetics in many parts of the world. If you have questions, need additional information or wish to become a dealer, call 859-3000, or send an email to customer_relation@saraleedirectselling.ph. You can also send inquiries through fax number 867-2279. You may also get in touch through text at 0921-9643367 or 0915-9823471.



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	4 THE LAKE HOUSE	5 THE FAST & THE FURIOUS: TOKYO DRIFT	6 SUPERMAN RETURNS	7 SUPERMAN RETURNS
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	3 SUPERMAN RETURNS 12:00, 3:15, 6:30, 9:45 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 SUPERMAN RETURNS 12:30, 3:45, 7:00, 10:15 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 SUPERMAN RETURNS 11:30, 2:45 GUARANTEED SEATS	
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	3 SUPERMAN RETURNS	4 SUPERMAN RETURNS	5 SUPERMAN RETURNS	
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M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 SUPERMAN RETURNS	2 SCARY MOVIE 4		
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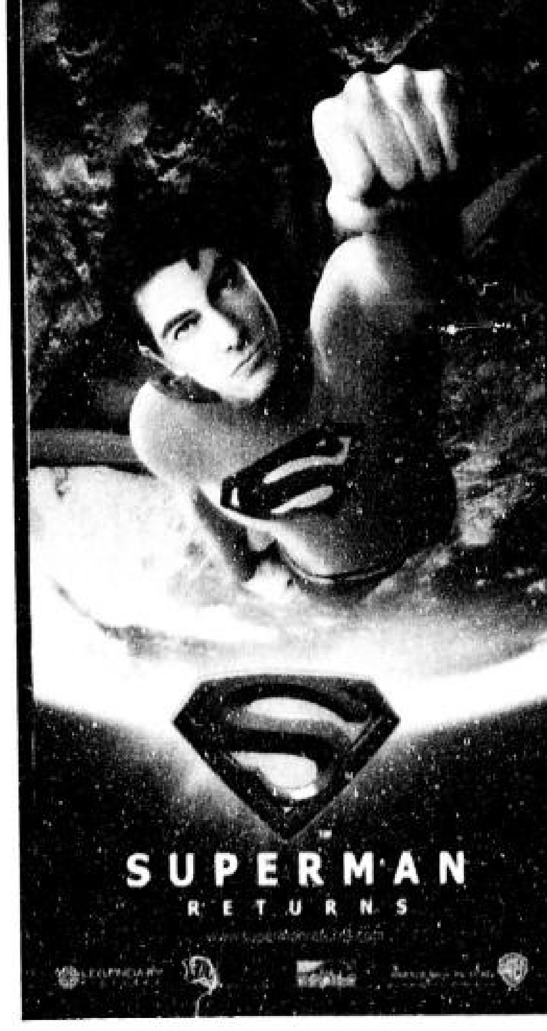

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Cinema 3* - 12:45 PM, 4:00, 7:15, 10:30
Cinema 5 - 11:45 AM, 3:00 PM, 6:15, 9:30
Cinema 6** - 10:30 AM, 1:45 PM, 5:00, 8:15
Cinema 7 - 11:00 AM, 2:15 PM, 5:30, 8:45

GREENBELT 3
Cinema 1* - 11:00 AM, 2:15 PM, 5:30, 8:45, 12:00
Cinema 2* - 1:35 PM, 4:50, 11:20
Cinema 3** - 12:00 NN, 3:15, 6:30, 9:45
Cinema 4** - 11:30 AM, 2:45 PM, 6:00, 9:15
Cinema 5** - 12:30 PM, 3:45, 7:00, 10:15

GLORIETTA 1
Cinema 1 - 12:35 PM, 3:50, 7:05
Cinema 2 - 12:05 PM, 3:20, 6:35, 9:50
Cinema 3 - 11:35 AM, 2:50 PM, 6:05, 9:20

GREENBELT 1
Cinema 2 - 10:45 AM, 2:00 PM, 5:15, 8:30
ONSTAGE - 1:25 PM, 4:40, 7:55

ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Cinema 1 (THX) - 12:30 PM, 3:40, 6:50, 10:00
Cinema 2 - 12:00 NN, 3:10 PM, 6:20, 9:30
Cinema 3 - 1:00 PM, 4:10, 7:20, 10:30
Cinema 5 - 1:30 PM, 4:40, 7:50, 11:00

MARKET! MARKET!
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Cinema 4 - 12:15 PM, 3:25, 6:35, 9:45
Cinema 5 - 11:15 AM, 2:25 PM, 5:35, 8:45
Cinema 6 - 1:55 PM, 5:05, 8:15

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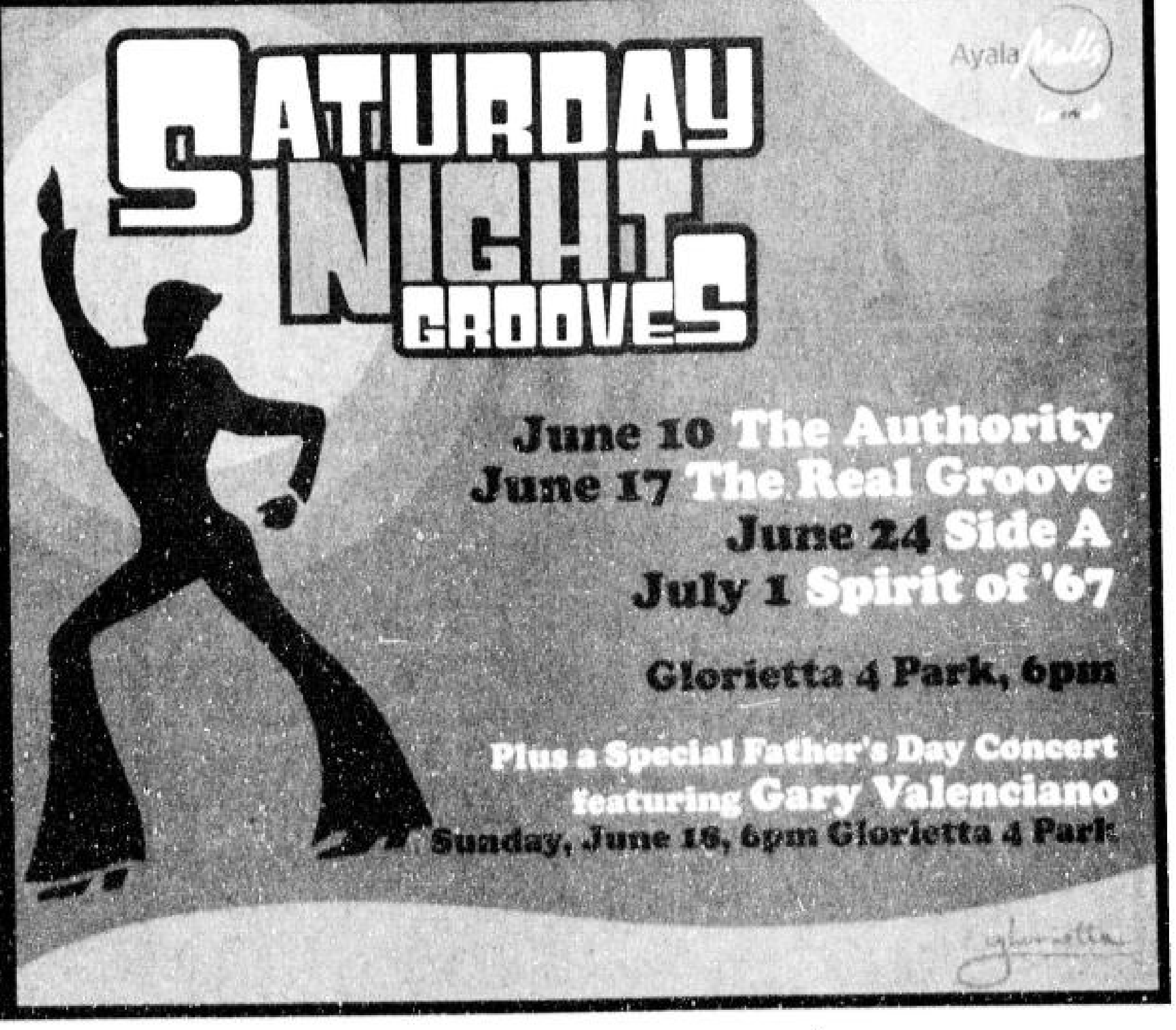
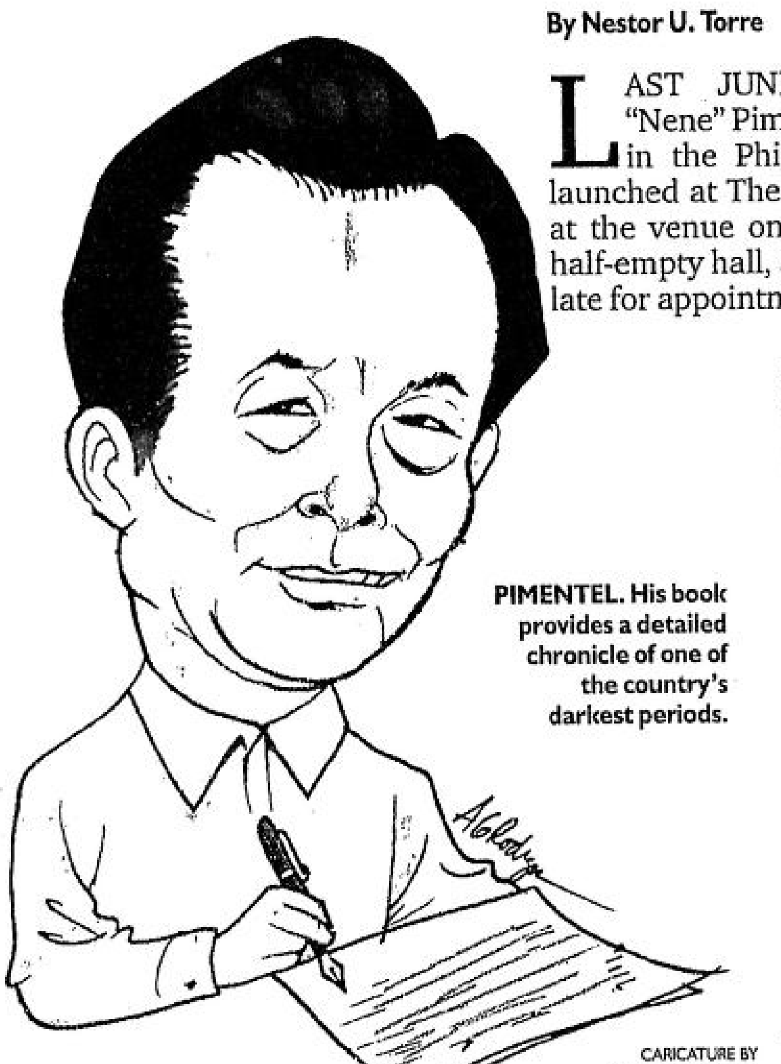


Traumatic years of martial law recalled

By Nestor U. Torre



PIMENTEL. His book provides a detailed chronicle of one of the country's darkest periods.

CARICATURE BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

LAST JUNE 7, SEN. AQUILINO "Nene" Pimentel's book, "Martial Law in the Philippines: My Story," was launched at The Manila Hotel. We arrived at the venue on time, expecting to see a half-empty hall, since people usually arrive late for appointments in these parts.

But, we were pleasantly surprised to see that the venue was already on "SRO" mode, with the hall full of political leaders and other VIPs. Clearly, they felt that Pimentel's book was an important contribution, and made it a point to be present to demonstrate their respect and admiration for its author.

Sneak peek

We had a sneak peek at the book months ago, when it was still a work in progress, because we used it as our source material for our martial law musical, "Pag-ibig sa Bayan," which was staged at the Meralco Theater last February.

As we pored over the manuscript's many pages, we were impressed with Pimentel's objectivity in recounting his painful experiences during his four incarcerations during the long martial-law period.

Many other people in his situation would have raged and seethed, but it was clear that, to Pimentel, what was important was to provide a detailed chronicle of the period, and the events and other factors that led up to it, so it would no longer be repeated.

True enough, at the book launching, Pimentel stressed that he did not feel any rancor toward anybody, not even Marcos, but simply wanted to remind all Filipinos that democracy was a prize that had to be continually upheld and defended against those who wanted to subvert it for their own dictatorial ends.

Luminaries

The political luminaries who spoke at the book launching underscored Pimentel's key role in defending Philippine democracy during one of the country's darkest periods—and after.

They included Senators Serge Osmeña and Joker Arroyo, who expressed their heartfelt gratitude to Pimentel for setting an inspiring example for others to follow, at a time when more callow men timorously hid, speechless in the shadows, or changed their political stripes with alacrity.

Pimentel thanked his wife Bing and their six children for also bearing the onus of martial law with him, and giving him the fortitude to hold on to his principles despite the deprivation and torments they were forced to suffer.

At the end of the book launching, Pimentel sat down to autograph copies of his book, and a long line formed in front of his table. We learned that all of the copies of the book at the launch had been sold out—a good "problem" to have!

We trust that many more Filipinos will go out of their way to read "Martial Law in the Philippines: My Story," to learn the bitter lessons of the past and thus help assure our democratic future.

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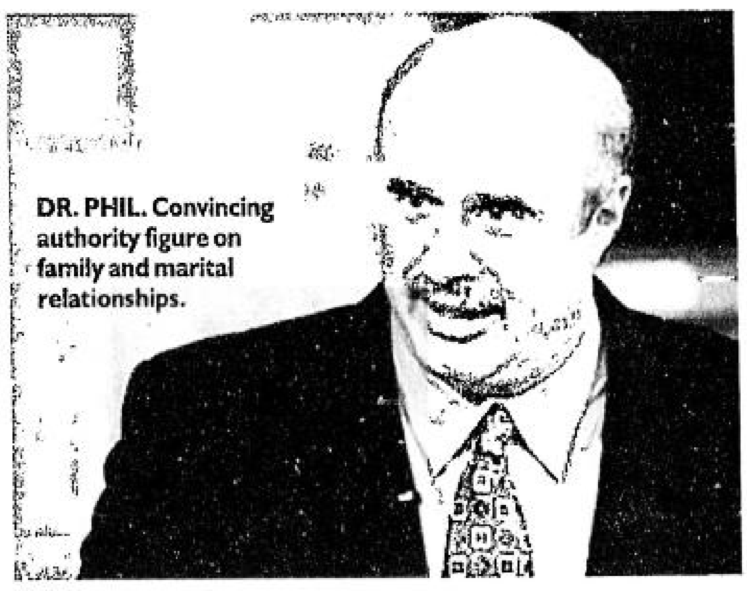
Why televiewers dote on Dr. Phil

By Lilia Borlongan-Alvarez



DR. PHIL. Convincing authority figure on family and marital relationships.

WATCHING "DR. Phil" daily makes one think that Americans are a bunch of self-absorbed, immature people.

Take the case of a young mother of four who has no qualms about her relationship with a married lesbian girlfriend. The mother even encourages her children (all under 13) to gratify themselves because she believes "it relieves the tension!"

Video games

Then, there's the man so addicted to video games that he has forgotten about his duty to help his wife take care of their two toddlers; a grown woman who's so paranoid about being alone that she has to have a "babysitter" and her parents around all the time; a 66-year-old single woman who searches through the Internet for a male companion, but lies about her real age; the woman who has been engaged seven times to different men; the husband who pitches a tent on the roof of his house to protest his wife's taking her two little children into their room at bedtime—etc.!

Books

And here's one for the books: A young man who sues his girlfriend (who bears his son and asks for child support) because he was not given the choice whether he wanted to be a father or not, and categorically denies he is the child's biological father.

Dr. Phil talks about the psychological problems facing American families today. The show enables him to deal with each of his guests' problems with straight-to-the-point, in-your-face comments such as "you're a user!," referring to men who admit they're moochers.

Then, he rationalizes why people do things the way they do and follows up with suggestions on how to get creative when it comes to getting along and being romantic with a difficult spouse, or how mothers and daughters who constantly bicker can live in harmony.

He talks about coming up with plans that "work" to counter habits that "don't work." He gives practical advice while changing his guests' perspective, to resolve family issues without telling them that they have to be results-oriented.

Troubled couples

On the other hand, although he tells troubled couples that there's a 50-percent divorce rate in the US, he seems very careful not to turn off his guests and doesn't offer religious or spiritual advice (unlike Mother Angelica), although his website talks about the sacrifice involved in marriage and family relationships.

Dr. Phil, who was included in Barbara Walters' list of "10 Most Fascinating People" in 2002, strikes us as a convincing authority figure on family and marital relationships because he sets a good example.

After his show, he walks toward his wife Robin, takes her by the hand, and waves to the crowd.

Website

It may appear a little scripted, but their story is a sterling example worthy of emulation. His website tells of his 29 years of wedded bliss.

Robin, says the website, has made raising their two sons, Jay and Jordan, her priority in life.

If there is one thing that Dr. Phil is saying about how marriages should work, it is that husbands and wives ought to be sensitive, caring, nurturing and spouse-oriented individuals.

In one of the show's "Dr. Phil and Robin" days, Dr. Phil reveals the secret of long-lasting marriages: Always remember the phrases "yes, dear" and "love it!"

Empowerment

The show's fourth season will focus on women's empowerment, how to leave an abusive husband, and how to find the right man.

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Been there, seen that

By Noelani Torre

FARIS. Ditzy blonde hams it up in fourth installment of comedy franchise.

THOUGH IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE a comedy and not a horror movie, something truly scary does happen in "Scary Movie 4": Leslie Nielsen takes his clothes off. Well, okay, they get zapped off by an anti-alien machine, but the end result—a naked octogenarian!—is the same.

Thankfully, by dint of strategically placed objects, we are spared from seeing him in all his naked glory. Not so, however, the audience in the movie scene.

World leaders

Nielsen, who plays the inept President of the United States, is addressing an assembly of world leaders at the UN when he unknowingly zaps himself—and later on, everybody else—out of their suits, skirts, and headdresses.

And so, the alien invasion has to be stopped by a handful of people: Cindy Campbell (Anna Faris), Tom Cruise-spoof Tom Ryan (Craig Bierko), and Regina Hall as Campbell's sex-crazed sidekick.

The main movie being spoofed here is Steven Spielberg's "War of the Worlds," but there are also elements culled from "Saw," "The Grudge," "The Village," "Brokeback Mountain," "Million Dollar Baby," and half a dozen more films.

The plot goes like this: Our favorite clueless blond, Cindy, gets a job taking care of an old lady, who happens to be living in a house haunted by a pale-white Japanese kid.

While she's looking for the answer to that mystery, she also has a thing going with her next-door neighbor, Tom Ryan. But, before anything else can happen, an alien invasion commences—and, of course, the world needs to be saved!

Jumble

It's truly a jumble, but then, the point in this kind of movie isn't how the story goes, but how many spoofs, parodies, and gags a director and his scriptwriters can stuff into it.

Of the film's numerous gags, however, only a few really work and, half the time, those that do only manage to elicit chuckles not belly laughs. (It's interesting to note, though, that Nielsen manages to elicit more laughs with his few minutes' worth of screen time.)

Comic timing

Faris and Bierko have approximately deadpan faces and good comic timing, so they manage to elevate the quality of the jokes.

Still, there's no hiding the fact that we've already seen and heard most of the film's gags in the first three movies of the series—and the frayed and tatty edges show through.

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9/11 film is timely and cautionary

By Nestor U. Torre

IT'S BEEN ALMOST SIX YEARS since 9/11, but very few movies have been made and shown about the airborne terrorist attacks that traumatized the entire United States.

Traumatic nature

The reason for the reticence is precisely the traumatic nature of the experience, which exposed a lot of raw nerves and fears that filmmakers didn't want to prematurely excoriate, for fear of their productions being rejected out of hand.

But, it looks like viewers are finally ready to relive that traumatic experience, to honor the heroes who unexpectedly emerged from it, and to make sure that the factors behind the terrorist attacks won't be allowed to hold sway ever again.

A couple of months ago, the dramatized documentary, "United 93," was screen-tested in the US, and preview viewers' reactions were both intense and liberating.

Belief

Heartened by this, filmmaker Paul Greengrass felt affirmed in his belief that Americans were ready to experience a 9/11 movie.

Savvily, the film is not about the Twin Towers attacks, which may still be too horrendous to dramatize, but about the fourth plane in the coordinated assault, which did not hit its intended target (believed to be the US Capitol building in Washington DC).

This distances the horror to some extent, making it easier for viewers to "take."

More inspiringly, it also "discovers" a number of heroes among United Airlines Flight 93's passengers, who attacked the terrorists in the plane's cockpit, to prevent them from hitting their targets.

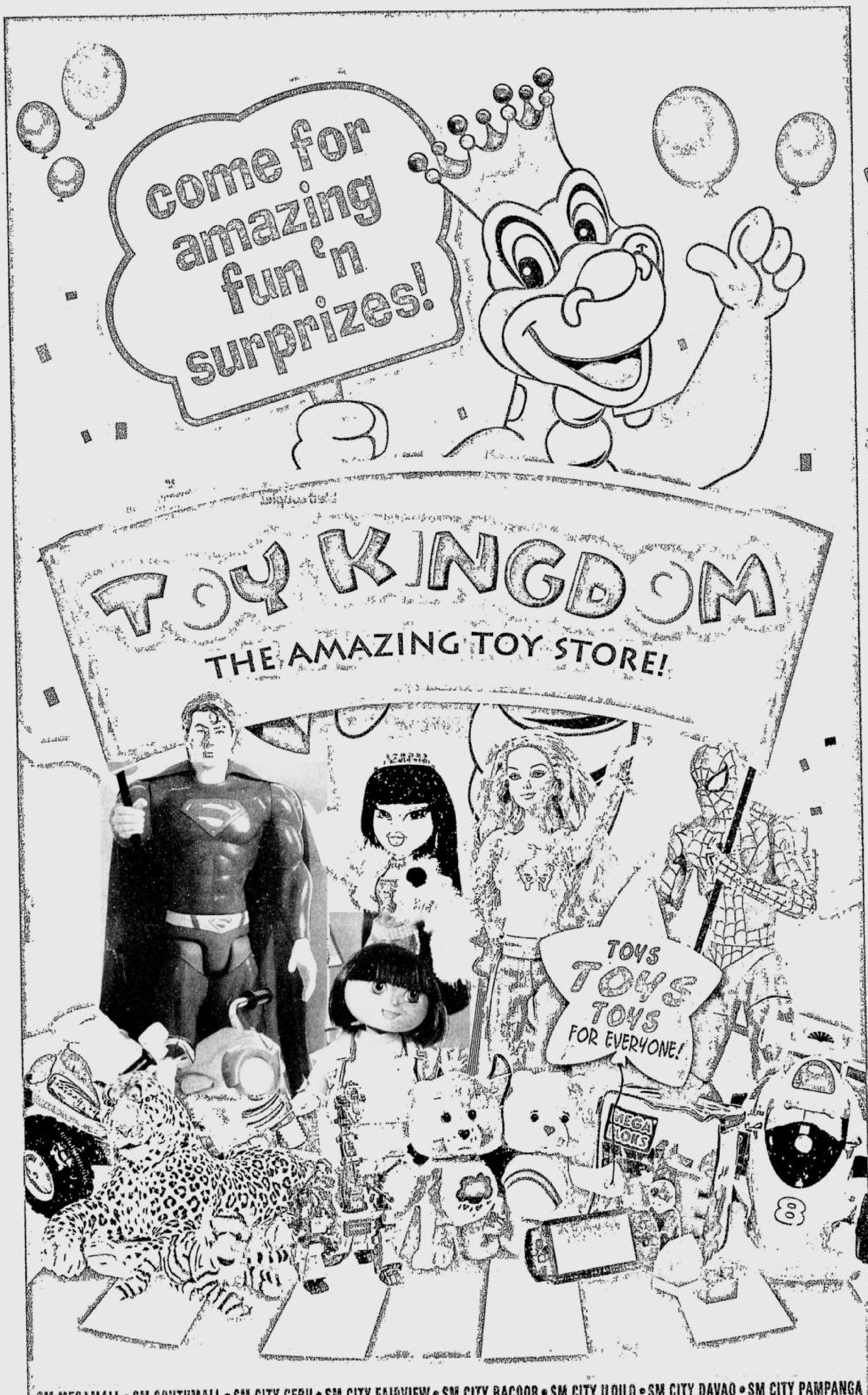
The fact that the passengers did this while sacrificing their own lives makes their decision and action all the more selfless and courageous.

Preview screening

The film is a success in the States. How will it play in other countries?

9/11/A4-3

DANIEL Sauli and David Allan Basche in a scene from Paul Greengrass' "United 93."



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A big hug and lots of thanks to TK the Dragon. That Toy Kingdom visit was a smash! Next time bring Mom, Dad and Sis too!

Scary movie doesn't do much 'Haunting'

By Noelani Torre

SOMETIMES, PEOPLE IN HORROR movies can be so dense—okay, make that *most* of the time. Then again, if people in their jammmies and nighties don't get up in the middle of the night to investigate supernatural sounds, wander into graveyards alone, or follow ghosts into dark places, we wouldn't have many horror films, would we?

In "An American Haunting," a teenage girl (Rachel Hurd-Wood) is being haunted by an invisible evil entity that shoves her blanket down at night, drags her around her room, suspends her in midair, and slaps her around.

Spirit

The poor, terrified girl is not the one behaving stupidly here—it's her loving parents who, after seeing their daughter getting manhandled by a spirit, still leave her alone in her room at night—and it's one floor away from theirs, too.

SPACEK. Weighty presence.

It's an insult to Sissy Spacek (she plays the mother) who, though she looks suitably dramatic scampering up and down creaky stairs with a candle held aloft, ought never to have been made to play a character so dim-witted.

True story

Set in Red River, Tennessee during the early 1800s, "An American Haunting" claims to be based on a true story—more specifically, on "the only recorded case in American history where a spirit has caused the death of a human being."

Apparently, according to state documentation, a certain Bell Family in the aforementioned area was plagued by a violent, but unseen entity. The case remains unsolved to this day, and what is presented in the movie is only one of the theories.

Directed by Courtney Solomon, based on the novel, "The Bell Witch: An American Haunting" by Brent Monahan, the movie begins in the present with a mildly suspenseful shot of a young girl being chased in the snow by an invisible presence.

Face to face

She manages to get into her house where she eventually comes face to face with the ghost of a girl. She screams, her mother wakes her up, and we realize that we've fallen for one of the oldest tricks in the horror movie book.

The mother discovers some old family papers in her daughter's room (it seems they are descendants of the Bells), sits down to read them, and the movie then segues to the 1800s.

Unfortunately, things hardly get any better from there. In the end, notwithstanding the weighty presence of Donald Sutherland and Spacek as John and Lucy Bell, "An American Haunting" proves itself to be as unoriginal as its beginning.

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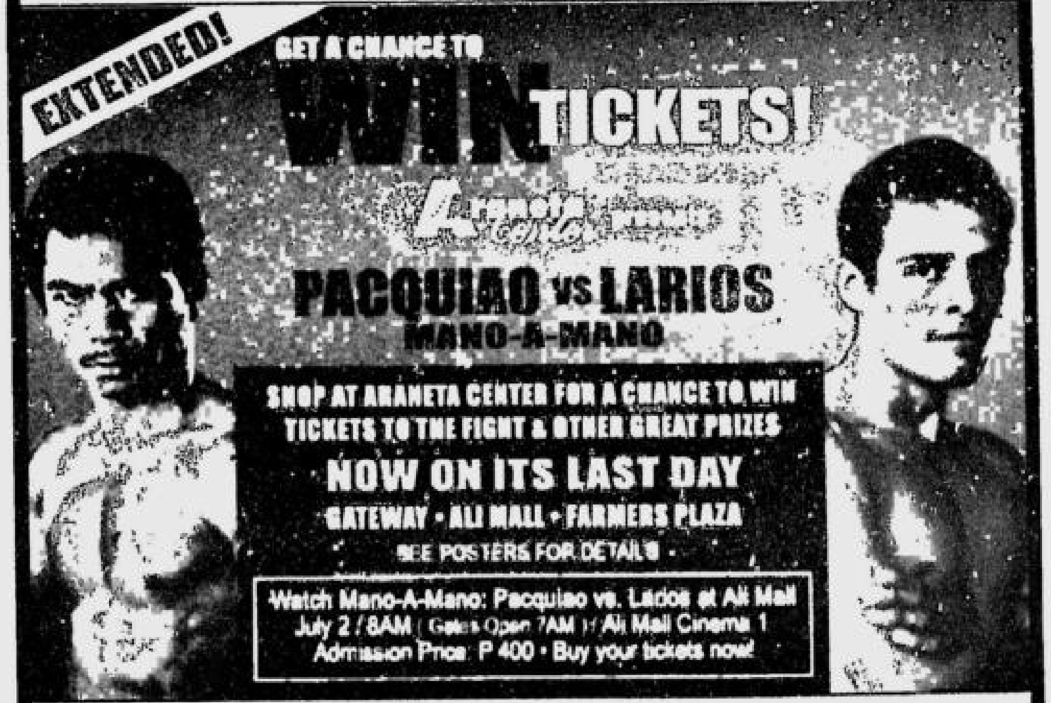

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1:00 / 3:15 / 5:30 / 7:45 / 10:00
SUPERMAN RETURNS
10:50 / 11:30 / 12:05 / 12:30 / 12:50
1:10 / 2:00 / 2:40 / 3:15 / 3:40 / 4:00
4:20 / 5:10 / 5:50 / 6:25 / 6:50 / 7:10
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SNEAK PREVIEW

Faith and sensationalism as pop-TV fodder

By Rito P. Asilo

WE'VE ALWAYS WONDERED WHAT THE BIG hullabaloo was over Jack Kenny's ambitious drama, "The Book of Daniel." After all, just how controversial could a story about a priest and his dysfunctional family get? —*Very*, apparently. And we recently saw how—and why.

Television doesn't run out of important things to say. But, the opinions it shapes and the perceptions it influences aren't always sound and relevant. When a TV program or a movie tackles controversial issues, it usually divides the critics—regardless if it's well-made or not.

Mixed reviews

Ron Howard's "The Da Vinci Code" is a good example: Its mixed reviews included a 100 percent rating from The New York Post, *but* it earned the ultimate pan from The New Yorker: A rating equivalent to—zero! You can just imagine how happy *that* must have made the creators of the reviled "Showgirls" and "Battlefield Earth."

But, Kenny must have anticipated that he was going to hit some raw nerves when he thought up "The Book of Daniel" for NBC. The show pushes thematic boundaries, indeed, and reeks of over-the-top sensationalism. Unfortunately, pompous, ratings-directed propaganda is not always synonymous to good, hard-edged entertainment.

Plus, you *don't* mess with Jesus and religion and not expect to arouse the ire of devotees. Unsurprisingly, the controversial series' scathing reviews are as passionate as the critical praises it reaps. But, its reason for being is, to say the least, instructive.

Parish priest

At the core of the story is Rev. Daniel Webster (Aidan Quinn), a liberal, pain-killer pill-popping Episcopal parish priest, who has four kids: A sex-crazed adopted Chinese son, Adam (his girlfriend's WASPy mother cringes at the thought of having Oriental grandkids running around her Christmas tree); a 16-year-old daughter, Grace, who's a promising *manga*-comic artist (she's recently been arrested for selling pot to raise money for an expensive computer-animation program), and a 23-year-old homosexual son, Peter, a doctor who's still grieving over the death of his twin brother.

Peter's homosexuality is accepted by his family, *but* he nevertheless agrees to go out on a date with Adele, the sister of the guy (David) he likes. He even has consensual sex with her to please his grandfather, Bishop Bertrum (James Rebhorn), to whom he hasn't come out yet.

Bishop Bertrum, whose wife is sick with the degenerative Alzheimer's disease, also has skeletons in his closet: While he's upset about the condition of his ailing wife, he maintains an affair with Daniel's boss, Bishop Beatrice (the superb Ellen Burstyn)!

Pressing concerns

Daniel, though, has more pressing concerns: His brother-in-law ran away with his secretary, Jessie—along with $3-million-worth of church funds! But, the former soon dies after a heart attack, and leaves a distraught, whiny wife, Victoria.

In one scene, Victoria chases away Jessie at the cemetery. You can imagine Daniel's surprise when he finds Victoria and Jessie already living together. Soon after, the former announces that, well, she *also* likes girls!

With the help of Dan's close friend, Fr. Frank (Dan Hedaya), a Catholic priest with connections to the mob, the embezzled money is found, but can only be "retrieved" *if* Dan agrees to do business with the Mafia! What's a guy to do?

More disturbing

This is where the plot gets even more disturbing: During troubled times, Daniel turns to Jesus (Garret Dillahunt)—not just in prayer, but in person! Jesus pops up from out of nowhere everytime Daniel is about to take a pill. But, while omnipresent, this Jesus is not as omniscient as we've all been raised to believe:

When Daniel is caught in a tight fix, he shrugs his shoulders and casually tells Daniel to refer to his biblical "one-liners" ("Turn the other cheek…," etc.).

If you haven't heard of this series, it's easy to think that we're simply stringing one outrageous storyline after another. But, Kenny has exercised his option to cook up as many preposterous plotlines as he can. Unfortunately, his outstanding actors can't save the show from scrutiny and ridicule.

Controversial programs

Television has had controversial programs that wisely—and successfully—tackled sensitive issues: Sex ("Sex and the City"), death ("Six Feet Under"), the paranormal ("The X-Files"), the occult ("Buffy, The Vampire Slayer"), homosexuality ("Queer as Folk," "The L Word," "Oz") and everything unconventional ("Twin Peaks"). But, those shows told plausible stories that inspired and entertained as much as they provoked and disturbed. "The Book of Daniel" just shocks—and leaves its viewers cold.

DILLAHUNT AND QUINN. Play Jesus and liberal priest, Fr. Webster, respectively, in "The Book of Daniel."

9/11 film. . . From page A4-1

"United 93" opens here this month, so a preview screening was recently held to answer that question.

Well, our own reaction to the film was very positive. We appreciated the production's rigorous adherence to facts, gleaned from the phone calls that some of the plane's passengers made to their loved ones throughout the ill-fated flight.

As the passengers' attack finally got underway, of course, fact gave way to educated guesses about what really happened in the plane's cockpit. Even during those speculative moments, however, there was a disciplined absence of melodrama and action-film gimmickry.

Unexpected challenge

The film was also instructive because it showed how unprepared security and military forces were to cope with the terrorists' unexpected challenge.

On the debit side, the film took too long to set the stage for the terrorists to initiate their takeover of the United 93 flight. Once the action starts, however, it never lets up, and viewers remain connected to the film up to its shattering finale.

'Maalaala'… From page A4-4

the most number of viewers it can generate; to avoid colliding with a strong competitor, and to "kill" a "weak" show and/or prevent it from gaining a wider audience.

Inventive

Let us applaud the "MMK" team for coming up with inventive ways to keep the show running. (Why not run it for the whole week? The rationale is simple: The program's quality can compete with imported Asian dramas, which the public has been lapping up in record numbers.)

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Dyspeptic symptoms usually appear when stomach movement slows down and food does not empty from the stomach. These symptoms often follow meals, but can occur anytime.

Treatment
Frequent remedies taken for Dyspepsia-like symptoms are drinks like tea, soft drinks or antacids. These remedies may relieve some, but not all of the symptoms of Dyspepsia.

A class of medication called Prokinetics can relieve Dyspeptic symptoms by restoring motility or normal stomach movement. Prokinetic drugs are what most doctors prescribe for Dyspepsia. The most prescribed Prokinetic drug is Domperidone, available in 10mg tablet form.

See Your Doctor
If symptoms persist, it is best to see your doctor. A Philippine Society of Gastroenterology (PSG) doctor will recommend the right treatment for Dyspepsia.

By Dr. Ramon E. Carpio
Chairman, Council on Dyspepsia
Philippine Society of Gastroenterology

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If symptoms persist, consult your doctor.

Ryan Agoncillo on living and loving

By Remy M. Umerez

RYAN AGONCILLO'S DOUBLE CD, "LOVESpeak," is a unique compilation of love songs. Released as part of Vicor's 40th anniversary bash, the collection is a dream come true for the TV host who, as a child, dreamed of releasing his own record.

The album showcases Ryan's forte: Talking and sharing his thoughts—this time, about life and love, in between tracks that are sung by some of the country's top recording artists like Sharon Cuneta, Basil Valdez, Martin Nievera, Gary Valenciano, Zsa Zsa Padilla, Pops Fernandez, Side A, Ric Segreto, Paolo Montalban and Aiza Seguerra.

AGONCILLO. Dream come true.

Happy memories

The 27-year-old actor shares: "I've been in good relationships, and I want to share the lessons I've learned from them with my fans. I always look back at happy memories rather than the sad ones. So, for the album's repertoire, we chose mostly feel-good tunes with positive messages."

Other than the relevance and quality of the songs, Ryan's "relationship" with the songs' interpreters was also considered: He has worked with Zsa Zsa in "Star in a Million" and currently co-stars with her in the popular soap, "Bituing Walang Ningning." Panjee Gonzales, who shares a duet, "Lagi Na Lang," with Side A's Joey Generoso, is Ryan's cousin.

Favorite performer

Martin Nievera was the first person to interview Ryan on ABS-CBN, while Gary V has always been his favorite performer. Ryan directed the Singapore stopover of Pops Fernandez's summer special with Star Cruises.

It was Rowell Santiago who first noted the chemistry between Ryan and Judy Ann Santos. Rowell offered him a good role in "Luv Text," but he turned it down because he wanted to establish himself first as a TV host.

Judy Ann Santos, whose solo album with Viva reached the gold record mark, makes a special appearance with "No Ordinary Love," the actress' birthday gift to her beloved Ryan.

'Maalaala' now telecast on Fridays

By Ramon E. Bayron

AFTER 15 PROLIFIC YEARS, "MAALAALA Mo Kaya" is, in our opinion, still he best drama anthology series on local television.

From the day of its inception, "MMK" was positioned as ABS-CBN's flagship drama program. Hosted by Charo Santos-Concio, one of the multi-media company's highest-ranking executives, the program is also the network's "developmental show"—a veritable "graduate school-on-air" for its homegrown talents.

Attitude

This is one show where the infamous Filipino "*puwede na 'yan*" attitude is unacceptable. A script goes through numerous revisions, and actors reshoot scenes until they're perfect. Many TV directors use their work on "MMK" as proof of their aptitude for film. It has trained and spawned more than its share of film professionals.

"Maalaala" "reintroduced" the local television industry to our Asian neighbors when it started to dominate the drama category of the prestigious Asian Television Awards. No award given to the show or its featured actors has ever been questioned. But, it was never intended to be a strictly "art-house" show that would play to a small audience.

Reasons

After 15 years, the country's longest-running drama anthology series bids goodbye to its Thursday primetime schedule and takes over the 9:30 p.m. slot on Fridays. The transfer is not a sign of surrender. Wise programming dictates that a show "slides" from one timeslot to another for any of the following reasons: To capture

'MAALAALA/ A4-3

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Meet Love Radio's wacky waker-uppers

NICOLE HYALA AND Chris Tsuper's wacky tandem is clicking with listeners of their show on 90.7 Love Radio, "Ang Tambalan ng Isang Balahura at Isang Balasubas," during the traffic report coinciding with the gridlock hours of 6:30, 7:30 and 9 a.m.

MONTAGE

POLICENA AND GAITE. Popular tandem.

Proof of their growing popularity: Five, full-packed Friendster accounts, a website (www.tambalan.piczo.com) which is nearing 50,000 hits, a grand fans' day on their first anniversary, and hosting gigs galore.

Nicole Hyala is actually Emmy Lou Gaite, a Business Management *cum laude* and Student Council president at Assumption, while Chris Tsuper is Adrian Policena, a college graduate of FEU.

Love Radio is the overall No. 1 radio station in Metro and Mega Manila, based on the latest survey conducted by the Radio Research Council and AC Nielsen.

Run for Toys

Nicksters, get ready for the Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards preview party on July 8. Before checking out the Orange Carpet walk at Aliw Theater, however, vote for your "Pinoy Wannabe" awardee and run for the coolest toys at Toy Kingdom branches.

Three lucky raffle winners will go on a five-minute toy run-shopping spree worth P120,000. This year's *Pinoy* wannabe nominees are Sam Milby, Sam Concepcion, Iza Calzado, Bianca Gonzalez and Manny Pacquiao.

On the KCA preview party: Booths, games, prizes and surprises begin as soon as the gate opens at 2 p.m., while the show proper reels off at 4 p.m.

'All in the Timing'

The British Council presents Peepolykus' award-winning comedy, "All in the Timing," with matinee and evening performances today at Equitable PCIBank's Francisco Santiago Hall. Peepolykus is known for its brilliantly realized characterizations, slick performances and striking visuals, which earned the British group a Fringe First Award at the Edinburgh Festival.

Streetscape

Streetscape, the Shang's outdoor entertainment center, goes retro this month. Bands performing: July 1, U-Turn. July 7, Acoustic Jive. July 8, Retrospect. July 14, Amadeus. July 15, Sould Out. July 21, Liquified Orange. July 22, Kearny St. July 28, Jay C. & Uso. July 29, Rockin' Revival. Performances start at 10 p.m.

Dream Honeymoon Package

Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila (245-1234) offers a special Dream Honeymoon Package to the first 20 couples who confirm within the months of July to August their wedding booking in the hotel's Ballroom. The package includes return airfare and two nights' accommodation for the couple in any selected Hyatt partner hotel in Asia, and the upgrading of a complimentary room to the Presidential Suite.

'Chi-noi'

Catch Vincent Tanada's "Chi-noi," Dulaang Bedista's first offering for its fifth season. The three-act dance-drama fuses history and dance with *kung fu* and *wushu*, and will be performed at the UP Main Theater (July 22-23, Sept. 2-3), St. Paul's University Manila (July 29-Aug. 27) and the CCP Main Theater (Sept. 10). The cast includes Chris Lim, Adelle Ibarrientos, Reggie Caranyagan, Jennifer Cosculla, Jay Barsana, Justine Untalan and Patrick Libao. Call 493-2767, or email dbap_sbc@hotmail.com.

Movies on TV

HBO, on July 1 at 9 p.m., "The Manchurian Candidate." 11:30 p.m., "Carnivale 17: Creed, OK." 12:25 a.m., "Carnivale 18: The Road To Damascus." July 2 at 5 p.m., "White Water Summer." July 3 at 5 p.m., "The Sea Wolves." July 4 at 3 p.m., "Before Sunset." July 5 at 9 p.m., "The School of Rock." July 6 at 8:30 a.m., "Defending Your Life." July 7 at 2 p.m., "Back to the Future."

On Cinemax, July 1 at 6 a.m., "Born Yesterday." July 2 at 6:45 p.m., "Mystic River." July 4 at 6 a.m., "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town." July 5 at 6 a.m., "Deliverance." July 6 at 3 p.m., "Indiscreet." July 7 at 9:30 p.m., "The Adventures of Brisco County Jr."

Website: www.inq7money.net

BUSINESS

Editor **Raul O. Marcelo** • *Assistant Editor* **Corrie S. Narisma**

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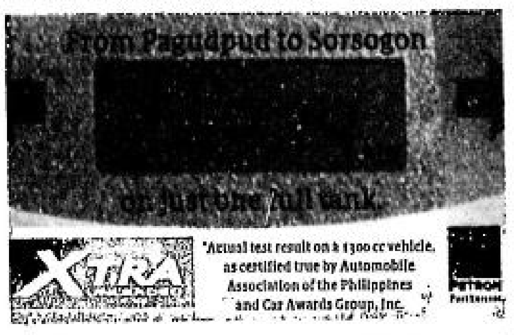
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*Actual test result on a 1300 cc vehicle, as certified true by Automobile Association of the Philippines and Car Awards Group, Inc.

Peso rallies to 53.11 to a dollar

Fed action triggers strong currency recovery

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY RALLIED TO A THREE-WEEK HIGH OF 53.11 against the dollar as the US Federal Reserve, after hiking its overnight interest rates by another quarter-percentage point, hinted that it would soon pause its monetary tightening.

After bottoming out at the year's weakest level of 53.65:$1 on Thursday ahead of the US Fed meeting, the local currency opened at an intra-day low of 53.35 and gained throughout the day to close at the day's peak of 53.11 to the greenback.

It was the peso's highest finish seen ending at 52.92:$1 last June 7.

Trading volume at the Philippine Dealing System also surged to $509.6 million as currency traders locked in gains from their US dollar positions after the US Fed move.

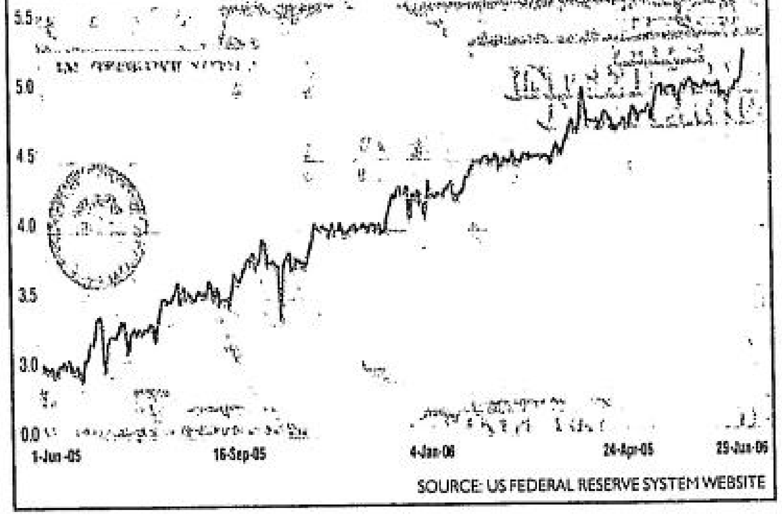
"The Fed action was as expected by the mar-

PESO/ B2

INQUIRER MONITOR

US Federal Interest rates

June 2005- June 2006



SOURCE: US FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM WEBSITE

US Fed hints at end to rate hikes

THE US FEDERAL RESERVE raised its key interest rate as expected but also signaled it may soon pause in its series of rate hikes, dealers said.

This led the dollar to extend losses in Asian trade yesterday, slipping to 114.90 yen in Tokyo afternoon trade from 115.14 in New York late Thursday, well down from levels above 116 yen seen before the Fed's statement. The euro rose to $1.271 from $1.2656.

Overnight the Fed hiked its federal funds rate by a quarter point, as expected, to 5.25 percent and rewrote its policy statement in a way seen by markets as signaling an end soon to its series of interest rate rises.

The Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) said inflation remained a threat even while economic growth is moderating.

"The Fed statement turned out to be less hawkish than the market had expected," said Kikuko Takeda, currency research manager at Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ.

"The market reacted by selling the dollar as it had previously priced in the risk of sharper interest rate hikes because of inflation worries," she added.

The Fed rate hike was the 17th consecutive time and brought the policy rate to its highest level in more than five years. When the Fed started its credit tightening campaign two years ago, the funds rate stood at a 46-year low of 1 percent.

In the statement explaining the decision, Fed Chair Ben Bernanke and his colleagues said that "the extent and timing of any additional firming that may be needed to address these risks will de-

US FED/ B2

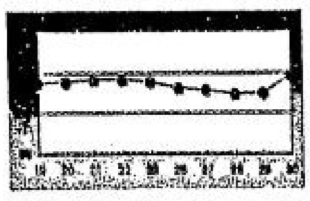
INSIDE

More firms selling items in small packages /B3

Filipino food products making waves abroad /B4

INDICATORS

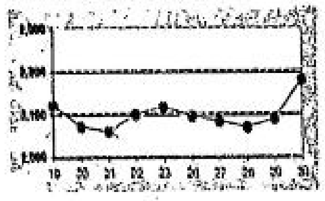
CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 53.11 = $1

As of 5 p.m., June 30, 2006



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Stocks jump 4.52%

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 4.52 PERCENT higher yesterday, hitting their best levels in three weeks following the easing of interest rate concerns after the US Federal Reserve meeting, dealers said.

The Fed raised interest rates 25 basis points to 5.25 percent late Thursday as expected but the language it used to describe the economic and inflation outlook was changed, which the markets took to signal a

STOCKS/ B3

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Pancake House earmarks ₱150M for local expansion

28 new stores to be put up this year

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

IT'S FULL STEAM AHEAD FOR casual dining chain Pancake House Inc. as it expands its local restaurant chain over the next two years.

Pancake House chair Martin P. Lorenzo said the company was spending roughly P150 million for its domestic expansion, which will increase its stores to 118 by the end of this year from 90 at the start of 2006.

Lorenzo also said Pancake House was merging its commissaries under one facility on Pasong Tamo, Makati.

Pancake House's recently acquired Dencio's currently operates a 400-square-meter commissary in Mandaluyong City. Teriyaki Boy, another restaurant chain owned by Pancake House, also maintains a commissary in Pasig City. Pancake House said separately in a financial report that these two commissaries would be merged under one facility for improved cost efficiency.

In terms of its store expansion, Pancake House expects to add 28 new stores by the end of this year. These consist of eight new stores for Pancake House, four stores for Dencio's and 16 stores for Teriyaki Boy this year.

"Within the next two years, we have enough locations in the Philippines to build (our restaurants)," Lorenzo said.

He also admitted that the company has received various offers for possible franchise partnerships overseas such as from China, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam.

Lorenzo said Vietnam looks promising but the company was not rushing to venture outside of the country.

"We have enough work in the next year or two but unless there is something really attractive (abroad, we will consider it)," he said.

Lorenzo also said that Pancake House was keen on taking a majority stake or at least 60 percent in bakeshop company Goldilocks. It is in negotiations with a number of shareholders of the company.

"We are excited over the growth potential of Goldilocks. We'd like to conclude this as soon as possible," Lorenzo said. He declined to identify the shareholders he was in talks with but said they were not part of the Go family.

The INQUIRER earlier reported that the Lorenzos had made a formal offer to buy the bakeshop chain for P2 billion.

Lorenzo refused to comment on whether Pancake was willing to raise its offer.

In addition to the 192 stores in the Philippines, Goldilocks has 16 outlets in the United States and a lone branch in Vancouver, Canada.

Peso rallies to 53.11 to a dollar

From page B1

ket while the statement may provide some relief in financial markets at least for now," Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said yesterday.

Tetangco had always stated that the country's good fundamentals should support the peso amid the recent selldown caused by uncertainties over US interest rates.

"Unlike the FOMC (Federal Open Market Committee), the BSP is into inflation-targeting. If inflation goes up, they have no choice, but at this point that the US Fed has said that from now on its action depends on the numbers that will come out—which I think won't be as bad, I think there will be less pressure on the BSP to follow (on its tightening)," said Jose Emmanuel Hilado, treasurer at BDO Private Bank and president of financial market association ACI Philippines.

Hilado said the latest statement from the US Fed implied a bearish direction for the US dollar.

"As we've seen overnight, prospects of a weak dollar are still there and if the dollar is weak, there's no reason why the peso should be weak," Hilado said.

Hilado said the peso was not in any risk of depreciating past recent lows.

"But neither do I see a decisive appreciation. The peso will probably be in the range of 52.75 to 53.65:$1 in the next few months," Hilado said.

ING Bank Philippines managing director for treasury Consuelo Garcia said that after another 25 basis points increase in August, the US Fed would likely pause and even start easing its monetary policy by year's end, reducing pressures on the local currency.

Although seasonal corporate demand would still weigh down the peso in the third quarter given the importation season, she said the peso would likely recover to 52:$1 toward December.

The BSP kept its own interest rates steady during its meeting Thursday given its outlook that local inflation would slow down in the second semester.

"Core inflation and other recent data continue to paint a scenario of limited demand-based pressures, while latest BSP forecasts remain suggestive of a deceleration in inflation in the second half, leading to within-target inflation in 2007," Tetangco said in a statement after Thursday's Monetary Board meeting.

US Fed hints at end to rate hikes

From page B1

pend on the evolution of the outlook for both inflation and economic growth, as implied by incoming information."

Wall Street, which had been worried that the central bank could overdo its credit tightening, soared on the Fed's comments, believing that the central bank is at least considering a pause in its two-year credit tightening campaign.

The Dow Jones industrial average, which was up about 80 points before the mid-afternoon announcement, surged higher after the Fed action. The Dow ended the day up 217.24 points to close at 11,190.80, based on preliminary calculations.

Analysts said while the Fed expressed concerns about inflation, the central bank also noted that the economy has begun to slow, the outcome the central bank has been seeking to achieve to keep inflation contained.

"The Fed's acknowledgment that the 17 rate increases are having their desired effect ... was cheered by the markets," said Bob Walters, chief economist at Quicken Loans.

"There is a sense that another rate hike by the Fed won't be automatic. This is a relief rally," said David Jones, chief economist at DMJ Advisors, a Denver-based consulting firm.

Jones said the wording of the statement gave a hint of a split on the Federal Open Market Committee, the panel of Fed board members and regional bank presidents, who meet eight times a year to set interest rate policy.

Jones said one camp was concerned that the jump in energy prices this year could be adding to inflation pressures while another group believed the Fed was running the risk of tightening too much and causing a more severe economic slowdown.

The committee said that "some inflation risks remain" even though it was likely that a moderation in economic growth "should help to limit inflation pressures over time."

The Fed's rate hikes have raised the borrowing costs for millions of Americans on everything from home mortgages to auto loans.

The latest Fed rate hike had been widely expected, given comments Bernanke made on June 5 in which he called a rise in the rate of inflation an "unwelcome" development, a comment that contributed to a one-day 199-point drop in the Dow Jones industrial average. *AP, AFP*

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

PREPARATION OF PSALM FOR WESM TRADING

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
PREPARATION OF PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT
SUPPORT/GUARANTEE FOR POWER SECTOR REFORM PROJECT
CONSULTING SERVICES
PHRD Grant No. TF055609

The Government of the Philippines, through the Department of Energy (DOE) and with grant assistance from the Japanese Government through its Policy and Human Resources Development (PHRD) Facility and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), is implementing the Preparation of Private Sector Development Support/Guarantee for Power Sector Reform Project (the "Project").

The DOE intends to apply part of the proceeds for consultant services for the provision of support to Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation (PSALM) to prepare for the introduction of a competitive electricity market. The services include assisting PSALM in establishing systems and strategies for electricity trading, and risk management and settlement systems of the output from the IPPs at the time of market commencement.

It is envisioned that the consultant will develop trading strategies, risk policies, risk manual, and operational trading manuals, and develop value-at-risk (VaR) models including monitoring the VaR of PSALM's aggregate trading positions.

The deliverables will be provided within six (6) months of the appointment of the consultants. The consultant must demonstrate:

1. In depth understanding of the operation of competitive electricity markets in other jurisdictions and substantial practical experience in trading in the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM).
2. Extensive practical experience in advising on risk management strategies and implementing trading and risk management systems for participants in energy markets.
    a. Reference on at least one case where the consultant was directly responsible for the implementation of trading and risk management systems for a major participant in a competitive electricity market with a bid-based pool (net or gross) must be provided.
3. Strong economic and financial market skills.

Preference will be given to consultants with working knowledge of Philippine WESM Rules and Republic Act No. 9136 or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 (EPIRA), its implementing rules and regulations and other pertinent documents related to WESM.

The DOE now invites eligible consultants to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested consultants must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (brochures, description of similar assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills among staff, etc.). Consultants may associate to enhance their qualifications.

A consultant will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank's *Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers* published in January 1977 (revised in September 1977, January 1999, and May 2002).

Interested consultants may obtain further information at the address below during office hours 0800 to 1700 hours.

Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation
Attention: Mr. Nonito R. Bernardo, Jr.
Vice President, Finance
2/F, SGV II Building, 6758 Ayala Avenue
Makati City, Philippines 1226
Telefax: +63 (2) 840-5058
E-mail: **nrbernardo@psalm.gov.ph**

Expressions of interest must be delivered to the address below by 26 July 2006, 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon.

The Bids and Awards Committee
Department of Energy
Energy Center, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila

(PDI–July 1, 2006)

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of June 30, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	31	32	31	31	371,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	47	50	47	50	3,532,900
China Banking Corp.	870	870	870	870	30
Citystate Savings Bank	20.5	20.5	20.5	20.5	600
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	2,590,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	72.5	73.5	72	73.5	301,800
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	33	34	32.5	34	3,309,500
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	54	54	54	54	100
Philippine National Bank	33.5	34	33.5	34	3,100
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	17.5	18	17.5	18	44,500
Security Bank Corp.	43	46	43	45	157,400
Union Bank of the Phil.	42.5	45	42.5	45	14,600
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Manulife Financial Corp.	1690	1690	1690	1690	20
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1	1	1	1	30,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2060	2110	2060	2110	3,000
Ivantage Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	1,653,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	43	43	42	43	490,500
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	43.5	45	43.5	45	527,300
Manila Electric Co. A	14.25	14.75	14.25	14.5	109,900
Manila Electric Co. B	21.5	22.5	21.5	22.25	3,087,600
Manila Water Co. Inc.	7.3	7.5	7.2	7.5	6,440,000
Petron Corp.	3.75	3.9	3.7	3.9	6,114,000
Trans-Asia Oil AND Energy	0.91	0.93	0.91	0.91	570,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
CADP Group Corp.	2.2	2.3	2.2	2.3	50,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23	23	23	23	37,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	31	31.5	31	31	494,000
Pancake House Inc.	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	59,000
San Miguel Pure Foods A	60	60	60	60	100
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.6	395,000
San Miguel Corp. A	65	65.5	65	65.5	96,400
San Miguel Corp. B	72.5	73	72.5	73	210,200
Universal Robina Corp	18	18.25	18	18	776,700
Vitarich Corp.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	200,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	3,090,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.42	1.44	1.4	1.4	3,521,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.35	4.6	4.35	4.6	178,000
CHEMICALS					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	20,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Active Alliance Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.075	0.075	0.0725	0.0725	4,100,000
Panasonic Mfg Phil Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	1,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	20,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	1,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	20,000,000
Ayala Corp.	370	372.5	357.5	370	390,100
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	200,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.2	969,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11.5	11.75	11.5	11.75	500
AJO Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	200,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.88	1.9	1.86	1.86	2,976,000
APC Group Inc.	0.19	0.195	0.19	0.195	1,320,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.02	1.06	1.02	1.04	880,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	10,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	20,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.7	9.8	9.7	9.8	3,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.04	1.04	1	1.02	17,310,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.8	3.6	3.75	310,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.8	2.85	2.75	2.75	2,144,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	5.8	6	5.8	6	559,000
Medco Holdings	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	10,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	600,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	40,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	6,200,000
SM Investments Corp.	216	219	213	214	101,230
South China Resources Inc.	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	140,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.73	0.75	0.73	0.75	300,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.0975	0.0975	0.0975	0.0975	100,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	12	12	11.5	11.5	18,246,200
Belle Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.04	1.06	20,391,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	7,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.26	1,790,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.9	1.96	1.9	1.96	2,669,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	20,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.59	0.6	0.57	0.57	18,530,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.035	10,400,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.36	1.36	1.28	1.32	14,220,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.8	15,000
Interport Res.	0.0038	0.006	0.0038	0.0055	18,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.46	1.48	1.44	1.48	33,994,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.21	0.215	0.21	0.215	5,760,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	9.9	10.25	9.9	10.25	98,000
SM Development Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	10,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.5	7.8	7.4	7.8	6,197,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	14.25	14.75	14.25	14.75	75,500
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.2	1.24	5,770,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	915	930	915	930	92,340
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.5	5,068,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel.Co.	1800	1830	1800	1830	202,480
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.185	0.185	1,560,000
Ionics Inc.	2.12	2.14	2.1	2.14	508,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	30,000
Philweb Corp.	0.031	0.031	0.03	0.031	68,000,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.6	2.6	2.55	2.6	45,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	13.75	13.75	13.5	13.5	2,925,100
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	50,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.4	1.56	1.4	1.42	56,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	12,520,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.57	0.57	0.56	0.56	500,000
EDUCATION					
IPeople Inc.	3.05	3.1	3.05	3.1	48,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2	2	1.98	1.98	209,000
Paxys Inc.	11	12	10.75	12	901,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0075	0.008	0.0075	0.008	128,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	7.9	8	7.8	7.9	3,596,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.3	0.31	0.29	0.29	16,930,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. B	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.34	11,280,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.022	0.022	0.021	0.022	73,200,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.024	0.025	0.024	0.024	43,700,000
Omico Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	623,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	4.1	4.25	4.05	4.25	11,971,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	4.1	4.25	4.05	4.25	18,674,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	28	28.5	28	28.5	110,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.36	0.37	0.36	0.37	600,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	110,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.26	1,780,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	97,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.26	1.26	1.22	1.22	664,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.24	1.26	1.24	1.24	554,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	18	18	17.5	17.75	676,800
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	14.5	14.75	14.5	14.75	319,700

DISCLOSURES

RAMON Sy has been elected director of **Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.** on June 28, replacing Vy Tonne So, who had resigned from the board.

* * *

JOHN L. Gokongwei Jr. James L. Go, Lance Y. Gokongwei, Lily Ngochua, Patrick Henry C. Go, Johnson Robert G. Go Jr., Ignacio O. Gotao, Gabriel C. Singson and Ricardo J. Romulo have been elected directors of **JG Summit Holdings Inc.** on June 28. Cornelio T. Peralta and Jose T. Pardo have also been elected independent directors of the corporation.

* * *

THE BOARD of directors of **iPeople Inc.** has approved the declaration of an 8-percent (P0.08 per share) cash dividend payable on Aug. 9 for stockholders of record as of July 14. Meanwhile, Helen Y. Dee, Marco Y. Santos, Yvonne S. Yuchengco, Perry Y. Uy, John F. Alabastro and Milagros V. Reyes have been elected directors, whereas Cesar A. Buenaventura, Renato C. Valencia and Orlando B. Vea have been elected independent directors.

Compiled by Kate Pedroso, PDI Research

CURRENCIES

June 30, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.790576	1.000000	53.5870
Japan	Yen	0.006863	0.008681	0.4652
United Kingdom	Pound	1.444067	1.826600	97.8820
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.101783	0.128745	6.8991
Switzerland	Franc	0.638591	0.807754	43.2851
Canada	Dollar	0.711782	0.900333	48.2461
Singapore	Dollar	0.496906	0.628536	33.6814
Australia	Dollar	0.578245	0.731422	39.1947
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.097075	2.652590	142.1443
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.210859	0.266716	14.2925
Brunei	Dollar	0.495348	0.626566	33.5758
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000107	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.020569	0.026018	1.3942
UAE	Dirham	0.215252	0.272272	14.5902
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.264900	67.7822
ArgentinaPeso	0.256265	0.324149	17.3702	
Brazil	Real	0.358327	0.453248	24.2882
Denmark	Kroner	0.134080	0.169598	9.0882
India	Rupee	0.017138	0.021678	1.1617
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.214539	0.271370	14.5419
Mexico	New Peso	0.069923	0.088445	4.7395
New Zealand	Dollar	0.471030	0.595806	31.9275
Norway	Kroner	0.126238	0.159678	8.5567
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013138	0.016618	0.8905
South Africa	Rand	0.108895	0.137741	7.3811
Korea	Won	0.000823	0.001041	0.0558
Sweden	Kroner	0.108330	0.137026	7.3428
Syria	Pound	0.015230	0.019264	1.0323
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024325	0.030769	1.6488
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000368	0.000466	0.0250

More companies selling items in small packages

Manufacturers changing tactics to attract market, AC Nielsen president says

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE WIDENING GAP BETWEEN THE RICH and the poor has given rise to alternative means of selling products and services, according to market research firm ACNielsen.

Company president and chief executive Steve Schmidt, who visited from his base in New York City, said in a briefing yesterday that low income consumers have been receiving less money while higher income were amassing more in the past few years.

Schmidt said that as income groups get polarized, manufacturers' and sellers' revise their marketing strategies and tactics to trail the money trend.

"We've seen companies adopting more and varied formats of stores, of packaging and of pricing," he said.

"This is not unique in the Asia-Pacific, but is also observed in Latin America and other emerging markets," he added.

Schmidt explained that for lower income groups, companies were thinking of ways to give these people access, like packaging smaller quantities in more affordable material, much like the sachet system in the Philippines.

The same goes for the sizes of stores as vendors adapt to the needs and means of consumers, he added.

Store sizes go both ways as, on the other end of the income spectrum, middle and upper class consumers are driving the growth of the so-called "modern trade" or marketing through large outlets like groceries and supermarkets.

ACNielsen data showed that in the past seven years, the share of groceries in Southeast Asian trade has been rising from 34 percent in 1999 to 43 percent in 2005.

Modern, self-service outlets gained more patrons in Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam.

On the other hand, traditional stores remained strong in the Philippines, but their share has declined from 45 percent in 2003 to 41 percent in 2005.

Benedicto Cid Jr., ACNielsen Philippines managing director, said sari-sari stores continued to fuel the growth of retail outlets in the country with one such store for every 150 people.

The latest data showed that sari-sari stores grew 8 percent to about 550,000 outlets or 90 percent of all retail centers in the country between 2003 and 2004.

Still, supermarkets grew the fastest in terms of number at 32 percent, while convenience stores grew 16 percent in the same period.

On the other hand, the number of market stalls shrank 3.5 percent while department stores decreased by 6.7 percent.

Stocks . . .

From page B1

softer stance.

There had been concerns going into the Fed meeting that it could raise rates by as much as 50 points or signal more hikes to come but in the event, the outcome was seen as indicating it will soon pause on rates.

That gave Wall Street a massive boost and set all the regional markets up for strong gains yesterday.

The composite index gained 94.17 points to 2,178.79 after trading between 2,084.62 and 2,182. Volume was 1.53 billion shares worth P3.44 billion.

The all-shares index rose 45.45 points to 1,369.89.

Gainers led losers 77 to 14, with 28 stocks unchanged.

"People are making a bet that the 17th rate hike (Thursday) or the next possible rate hike (in August) in the US will be enough to knock out inflation (there)," said Nestor Aguila of DA Market Securities.

Top-traded Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. closed up P90 at P1,830.

Among other blue chips, Ayala Corp. gained P20 to P370, Ayala Land rose 50 centavos to P11.50 and Bank of the Philippine Islands advanced P4.50 to P50. *AFP*

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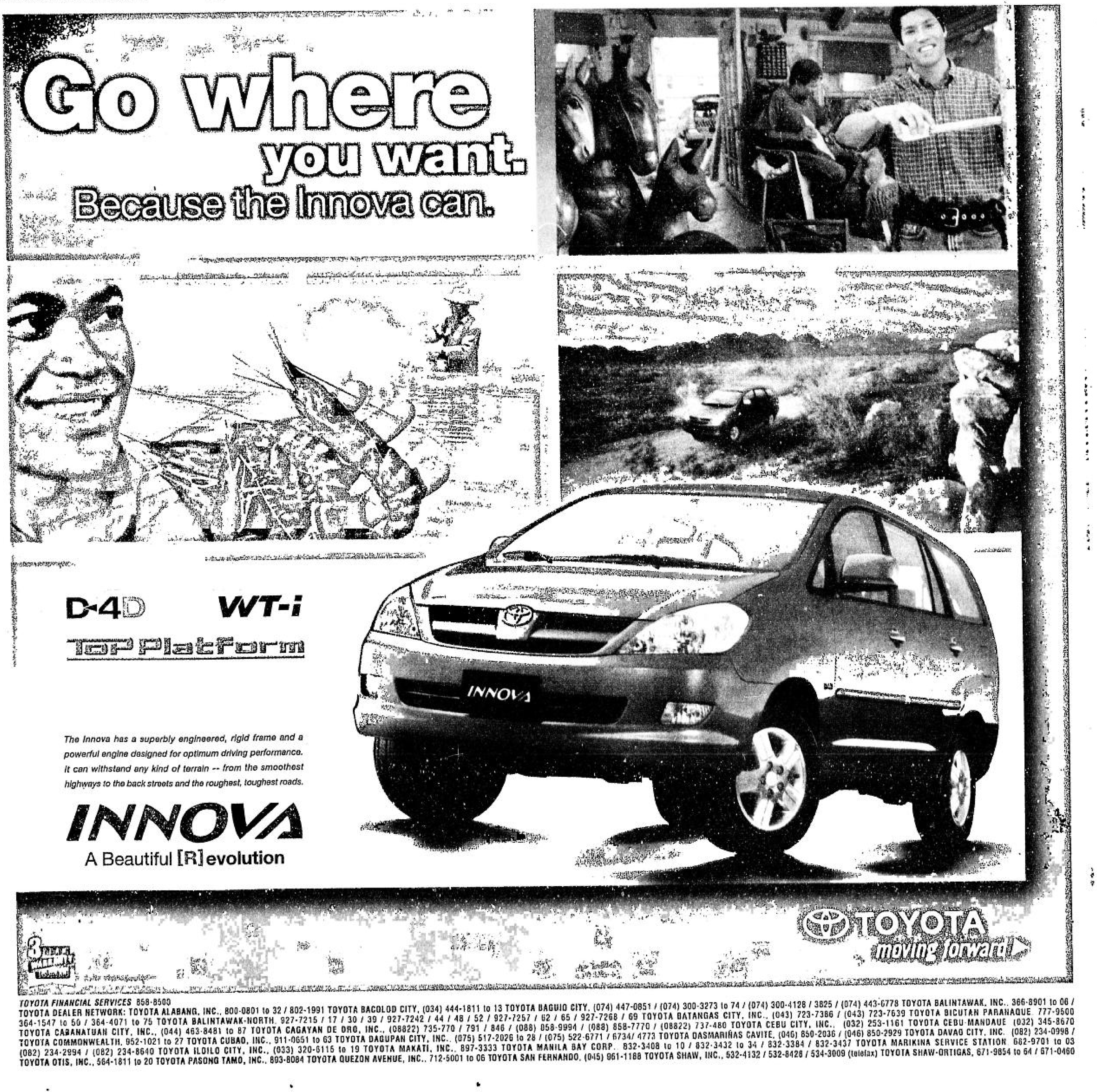

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WB approves key dev't loans worth $210M for RP

ODA meant to improve health system, perk up investments

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE WORLD BANK BOARD YESTERDAY approved two more key official development loans worth a total of $210 million to beef the the country's health sector reforms and perk up local investments.

In a press statement, WB country director Joachim von Amsberg said the new loans—firmed up only a week after the $200-million package for basic education was approved—were part of the multilateral lender's increased support for the Philippines, made possible by the government's gains on the fiscal front.

The board approved $110 million for the "National Sector Support for Health Reform" program, and another $100 million for "Support for Strategic Local Development and Investment" agenda.

"Similar to other World Bank-financed programs, these loans support strong measures to help improve the quality of public spending, help improve governance, and help reduce the risk of corruption," von Amsberg said.

"We seek to support our Philippine partners in their efforts to improve public service, take decisive action against corruption, and increase tax collection. These are three closely linked efforts for building public institutions that work for the common good."

The health program aims to make access to health insurance and health care more equitable, and make the health system more efficient in meeting the needs of the poor and the disadvantaged.

"The high costs of health care and loss of earnings due to illness are a common problem, especially among the poor in the Philippines," he said. "We are pleased to support social programs in the education and health sectors that tackle the causes of poverty. Investments in these social sectors yield significant poverty reduction."

The biggest loan components of the health program were:

- $50 million to provide health insurance for the poor by financing the government's payments to the Philippine Health Insurance Company to subsidize premiums for poor households targeted by local government units; and,
- $48.5 million for disease prevention, control and elimination, and for performance-based grants for achieving public health improvement for participating LGUs.

The Local Development and Investment Project seeks to improve local public service provision and management by facilitating access by local government units to viable financing to implement strategic investments for infrastructure and social services.

The state-owned Land Bank of the Philippines, as the borrower of the loan, will provide subloans to LGUs, public utilities and private operators to enable these entities to implement investment sub-projects that have been identified in the LGUs' development plans.

"Well-managed local governments have become models for effective public sector management in the Philippines," von Amsberg said. "If local governments are further empowered and provided incentives for good performance, they can bring the Philippines onto a path of rapid development."

Scientists working on 'super carabao'

By Christine A. Gaylican

FILIPINO SCIENTISTS ARE working to produce the country's first cloned carabao—"a super water buffalo"—in line with the government's effort to increase food production and ensure the country's food security.

According to Agriculture Secretary Domingo Panganiban, the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC) expects the super carabao within the next two years.

Panganiban also said that the scientists are working on other "bio-tech" products, such as a pest-resistant breed of eggplant.

He said that papayas resistant to the ring spot virus, and papayas with delayed-ripening trait, multivirus resistant tomatoes and a variety of genetically improved crops, are also in the pipeline.

Panganiban said the country is pinning its hopes on agricultural biotechnology to increase food production and solve the problem brought on by diminishing land area devoted to food production.

He said that over the past ten years, around 500,000 hectares have been converted for industrial, commercial and residential uses. He said that only through modern agricultural technology could the country cope with the increasing demand for food.

Panganiban said the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) is now developing multivitamin-enriched rice.

Meanwhile, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources is also developing improved breeds of tilapia and milkfish (bangus) that are better-tasting, fast-growing and can live in different conditions, Panganiban said.

The Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), he said, is also coming up with a kadang-kadang resistant variety of coconut.

Alicia Ilaga of the DA's Biotechnology Implementation unit said that the government is focusing its attention on bio-pharming, or the commercialization of plant-based pharmaceuticals.

She said the government is now stepping up research and development to supply ingredients of pharmaceutical products through public-private partnerships.

$60M in capital expenditures set for Smart 3G

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST telecommunications group will spend $60 million dollars to expand its third-generation network facilities, which it hopes will be the company's future driver of earnings growth.

According to the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), the allocation for capital expenditures will be sufficient to acquire and install equipment for an additional 1,000 cell sites.

"Most of these cell sites will be 'ultra sites'—state of the art and very scalable," PLDT and Smart Communications Inc. president Napoleon L. Nazareno told reporters recently.

The company is investing heavily in the 3G technology which, in essence, allows subscribers to make video calls on their mobile phones. It also allows them to watch television broadcasts direct to their phones, download videos, and surf the Internet at broadband speeds.

PLDT and its rival Globe Telecom Inc. are making big bets on 3G technology, despite the absence of a successful business model for this sector anywhere in the world outside Japan.

The PLDT and Smart head said the company's return on investment for its 3G business segment at present still stands below 10 percent, but he declined to reveal how much profit margin the company is aiming for.

Also, Smart yesterday launched a new promo that will allow subscribers to send free text messages overseas in conjunction with the use of their mobile phones for international voice calls.

From July 9 to August 9, Smart prepaid subscribers who call parties abroad from their cellular phones will enjoy free international text.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
REVIEW OF ELECTRICITY DEMAND FORECASTING

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
PREPARATION OF PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT
SUPPORT/GUARANTEE FOR POWER SECTOR REFORM PROJECT
CONSULTING SERVICES
PHRD Grant No. TF055609

The Government of the Philippines, through the Department of Energy (DOE) and with grant assistance from the Policy and Human Resources Development (PHRD) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), is implementing the Preparation of Private Sector Development Support/Guarantee for Power Sector Reform Project (the "Project").

The DOE intends to apply part of the proceeds for consultant services to review the methodologies for the forecasting of electricity demand. The consultant would review the current forecasting methodologies used by DOE, National Transmission Company (TRANSCO) and Manila Electric Company (or MERALCO) in the light of the past performance of the forecasts and international best practice and provide recommendations on the role of the forecasts with the introduction of a competitive market and improvements in the approach to forecasting.

The deliverables will be provided within three (3) months of the appointment of the consultants. The consultant must demonstrate:

1. In depth understanding of the electricity sector.
2. Extensive experience in economic forecasting, in general, and the forecasting of energy demand, in particular.
    - Reference to at least one case where the consultant had direct and prime responsible for the economy-wide electricity forecasts for use in system planning and/or market oversight.

The DOE now invites eligible consultants to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested consultants must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (brochures, description of similar assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills among staff, etc.). Consultants may associate to enhance their qualifications.

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank's *Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers* published in January 1977 (revised in September 1977, January 1999, and May 2002).

Interested consultants may obtain further information at the address below during office hours 0800 to 1700 hours.

Department of Energy
Attn: Melinda L. Ocampo, Undersecretary
4th Floor, DOE Bldg. Energy Center, Merritt Road
Global City, Taguig Metro Manila, Philippines
Tel: (632) 8402173
Fax: (632) 8402067
E-mail: **mlo_phg@doe.gov.ph** and/or **mycaps@doe.gov.ph**

Expressions of interest must be delivered to the address below by 19 July 2006, 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon.

The Bids and Awards Committee
Department of Energy
Energy Center, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila

(PDI–July 1, 2006)

Mutual benefit groups to raise minimum guaranty to P12.5M

By Michelle V. Remo

THE INSURANCE COMMISSION HAS DIRECTed mutual benefit associations to each increase their guaranty funds to a minimum of P12.5 million, saying that the move will protect their clients in the face of financial troubles now affecting half the industry.

Previously, the minimum amount of guaranty fund was only P10,000.

"There was really a need to increase the amount because you cannot do anything with P10,000," Insurance Commissioner Evangeline Escobillo said. "With P12.5 million, clients may be protected in case of failures."

Escobillo said that of the 21 licensed mutual benefit associations, 11 are facing liquidity problems.

"To the prejudice of hundreds of thousands of members, a number of mutual benefit associations have failed because of mismanagement and failure to comply strictly with the provisions of the (Insurance) Code," according to Circular No. 2-2006 recently issued by the Insurance Commission.

Mutual benefit associations are designed to provide clients with financial support in cases of sickness, displacement from work, and death of members or their relatives. These social security organizations mostly cater to small clients, such as teachers, military personnel, farmers' groups, and cooperatives.

"The socioeconomic impact of mutual benefit associations, whose members, more often than not, belong to the less advantaged sectors of our society, is inestimable," the Insurance Commission said.

The circular said that all mutual benefit associations are required to deposit with the Insurance Commission the amount of the guaranty fund. The deposit may come in the form of cash or government securities.

The Insurance Commission invests the funds of each of the mutual benefit associations either in government securities or in interest-bearing deposits with a financially sound commercial bank or trust entity.

The move to increase the guaranty fund of mutual benefit associations was in line with the objective of the Insurance Commission to better protect customers of security firms and thus promote the industry, the agency said.

The issuance of the circular on mutual benefit associations was consistent with the recent move to increase the capitalization requirement of new life or non-life insurance companies to P1 billion, and of reinsurance companies to P2 billion.

Filipino food products making waves abroad

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FOREIGN BUYERS SNAPPED UP SUPPLIES of Filipino ethnic food products such as saluyot, laing, pinangat, pili and polvoron during an international food fair held last May, according to the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions.

Citem chief Fe Agoncillo-Reyes said the foreigners' buying binge pushed up sales at the yearly IFEX Philippines by 316 percent to about $80 million from about $32 million in 2005.

Reyes said at least 1,300 buyers—including those from Australia, Canada, China, Europe, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan, and United States—checked out the exhibits of 283 food exporters and manufacturers.

"We are very pleased to say that the significant growth in the number of visiting buyers and in the earnings of IFEX proved that our country remains a reliable source and hub for Asian ethnic foods, Filipino cuisine, and fresh and processed products," she said.

The best selling products of IFEX 2006 were fresh and frozen fish; sardines; frozen fruits and vegetables like saluyot, ampalaya, and banana; octopus; meat preparations like ham and sausage; processed fruits like banana chips and dried fruit cocktail; fruit and vegetable juice; coffee and cocoa; cookies and crackers; and cereal preparations such as cake and polvoron.

This year's fair featured hot dishes from the Bicol region, with highlights on pili nut, laing, pinangat, and crab meat products.

Also, IFEX 2006 promoted aggressive and creative marketing among firms through competitions like that for the Best Booth award, which KSK Boy Bawang won.

Also, Boy Bawang was one of 23 new brands that was awarded "Superbrand" status last week in view of its strong performance.

During the trade event, five companies were bestowed the Trendy Awards, including Antonio Pueo Incorporada, FD Gonzales Food Product, Gem Food International Inc., Nutri-Prime Products Inc., and Sorsogon Food Enterprises.

Reyes said the tilts were held to motivate food manufacturers to further improve their standards of presentation, as well as to give credit to those who have invested their time, effort and resources in developing a product for the export market.

SCIENCE/HEALTH

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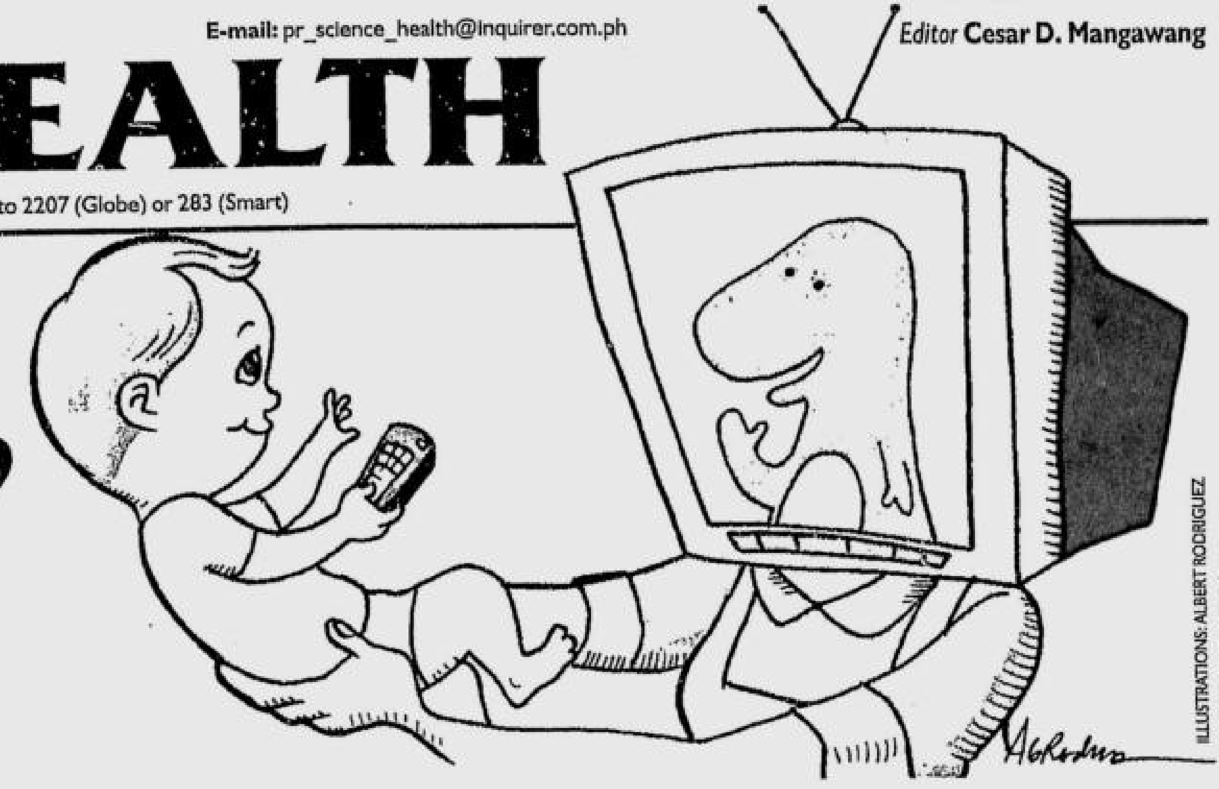
Stop making TV a 'babysitter,' parents urged



ILLUSTRATIONS: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

PSYCHIATRISTS AND PSYchologists here in the Philippines have a new term for television nowadays: a modern baby sitter. And after witnessing for generations how healthy, active adults transform into sedentary potatoes staring at the boob tube for hours on end, child development experts are making a plea to parents not to let the same thing happen to their children.

Dr. Elizabeth Ventura, professor and chair of the UP Department of Psychology, also blames *yayas* (nannies) for dragging along their young wards into watching their favorite TV programs for hours.

However, the responsibility still lies squarely on the shoulders of parents, says Dr. Grace Macapagal, child and adolescent psychiatrist, who adds that today's socioeconomic realities aren't helping create more quality time between parents and their children. "How big the influence of media in the cultural and moral values of the children, at the end of the day, falls upon the shoulder of the parents," she says.

'Strong' correlation

Ventura cites a foreign study conducted last year showing the "strong" correlation between attention span and the amount of time that the child spends watching TV. The longer a child aged between 2 and 3 years watches TV, the shorter the attention span.

Ventura describes TV as a source of fast-moving information with stimulating colors, which she says doesn't match a classroom setting. She adds that the classroom has a different demand (on the child), which requires paying attention for longer periods of time, and stimuli are not presented in the same way.

"In other words, TV doesn't help for behavior during schoolwork."

Not everything about TV is detrimental to a child, however. "On the other hand, there are studies that show educational TV shows are helpful," Ventura says.

Macapagal says that at the end of the day, it is up to the parents to monitor and explain the content of shows and of cybermedia.

According to her, the American Pediatric Association recommends only a maximum two hours of exposure to TV per day. Ventura even adds that one or two hours of educational TV would help the child gather more knowledge.

"If the parents monitor the child's TV viewing from the start, the child will not be hooked on TV. *Pero pag nababad na siya duon, mas mahirap pahintuin* (But when the child develops the habit of overexposure, it becomes harder to stop)," Ventura warns.

Violent programs

The Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists of the Philippines (Cappi) observed that as a consequence of making TV a baby sitter, children get unnecessarily exposed to violent programs. Such exposure develops negative consequences in the children's outlook in life.

"We cannot judge today's children on the basis of our own (TV) exposure in our own days," says Dr. Cornelio G. Banaag, Cappi director.

He cites as example large billboards alongside busy highways showing models wearing only underwear. According to him, years ago these images would have been seen only in adult magazines.

He also criticizes the reenactment or dramatization of heinous crimes on TV. He says that even if producers and editors blurred the series of violent images to cushion the violence of the acts, the mind has already interpreted the act.

"(TV violence) assaults our sensibilities, our sense of propriety. *Mabuti medyo nawala na yun* (It's good we're seeing less of that)," Banaag says.

"The younger the persons are exposed to these pictorial representations, whether it's on TV, newspaper, or radio, the greater the risk of damaging the developing minds and the mental health of the individual," he adds.

A University of Washington study cited by Ventura ties TV viewing, video games and Internet use to aggression and violent behavior, sedentary lifestyle, obesity and social isolation. The study says that the harm begins early in the preschool years and continues through adolescence.

Of cloaking and laptops

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

AN OLD FRIEND, THIRTY-something Rommel Tiongco, solutions architect of SAP Philippines [rommel.tiongco@sap.com] sent this amusing but slightly alarming e-mail: "I have been away from school for so long that I find it hard to relate to what may be happening on campus. Professors using powerpoint, wifi in the campus, laptops in class, students saying that people scribbling make more noise than people typing on laptops. I feel old. I wonder if you have the same issue in Ateneo."

As an example, Mel referred to Prof. June Entman of the University of Memphis who last March banned laptop computers from her class because she felt that computers were interfering with student learning. Students with laptops allegedly preferred to transcribe and type rather than analyze or focus on the discussion. Furthermore, laptops hindered eye contact between teacher and student, and the exasperated professor required her students to take notes by using—what else—old-fashioned pen and paper. Since this was a class of law students, they tried to complain to the American Bar Association, with some saying that without laptops, they could not take good notes. Thankfully, the complaint was dismissed.

Not the ideal solution

My reply to Mel: I myself allow laptops at times (in English or Psychology classes), but not in math, where I tend to agree with Professor Entman, and anyway, many math symbols are difficult to type without nonspecialized programs. Usually I require students clicking away on laptops to sit either in front or at the corner of the class, where they will cause the least distractions. As for Powerpoint, it is already *de rigeur* even in many elementary and high schools, and some universities have wi-fi spots. Technology, like most anything, is a two-edged sword. Many of its fruits have become indispensable, but we need to refrain from relying on them to the extent that we lose our thinking skills in the process. Thus, contrary to what many corporations believe, a computer in every classroom may not be the ideal solution to our sorry state of education.

Back to laptops. Perhaps a cloaking device can be a compromise. Yes, you heard it right—no longer the realm of the Klingons in "Star Trek," an honest-to-goodness invisibility cloak may soon become a reality. In a recent issue of the journal Science, two teams of researchers outline feasible plans, but contrary to what sci-fi fans expect, these are based not on any change in chemistry, but on nanotechnology (the science of the very small). Simply put, the teams propose to use so-called metamaterials and alter their nano-scale structure (we are talking here of scales several times smaller than microscopic) so that light can render them invisible.

Metaphor of water

Prof. Sir John Pendry, together with Doctors David Smith and David Schurig of Duke University in North Carolina, uses the metaphor of water. His team plans to make light waves flow around an object the same way that water does. But light and water are not totally the same, so some tinkering has to be done. According to Pendry, when we place a pencil in moving water, the water flows around it and closes up, which is not the case with light, which hits the pencil and scatters. So voila! They intend to put a coating around the pencil to allow light not to scatter, thus making it invisible.

Incidentally, though, since their project is sponsored by the US Defense Advanced Projects Agency, their priority is to develop a cloak from radio waves, which they hope can be operational in a couple of years.

Creating a mirage

The other cloaking team, led by British Prof. Ulf Leonhardt, is not shy about using magic, and freely uses the term "illusion." Here the researchers intend to bend light around an object in such a way that it leaves the object in exactly the same way that it hits it, thus creating a mirage. The mathematics of the whole enterprise has already been worked out, and now it is time for implementation.

Who knows, someday cloaked silent laptops may become available, and students and teachers can do their work in harmony.

For more information on laptops in class and cloaking devices, go to http://www.usatoday.com/tech/news/2006-03-21-professor-laptop-an_x.htm? and http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/science/nature/5016068.stm.

* * *

E-mail the author at blessbook@yahoo.com.

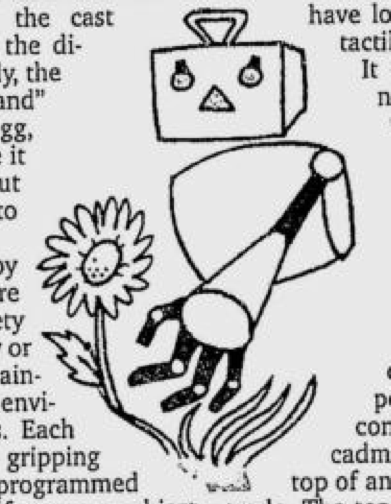
'Touchy-feely robots'

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon

ENGINEERS HAVE LONG SOUGHT TO develop a robotic system that acts like a human hand. For now however, they make the distinction between robotic systems that have touch sensors and those with tactile sensors. The former identifies whether or not there is an object to grasp, while the latter distinguishes the object's textures, its dimensions, and any forces acting upon it.

Most robotic systems are currently applying touch sensors. For example, in the movie "Jurassic Park," while watching the animated introductory video about how the island's scientific team has brought the dinosaurs back to the amusement park, the cast watches a robot arm turn the dinosaur eggs in the lab. Deftly, the multipronged metal "hand" reaches out to grab each egg, firmly enough to make sure it doesn't fall, and yet without exerting too much pressure to make the eggshell crack.



Several industries employ robotic systems as such are described above for a variety of tasks—from lifting heavy or hazardous materials, to maintaining a contaminant-free environment for delicate tasks. Each robotic arm has a specific gripping appendage that has been programmed to exert a certain amount of force on an object to ensure that it is held securely and safely.

Unlike humans, however, most robotic systems aren't capable of deviating from their programming; an arm programmed to lift grand pianos onto assembly lines for example, would likely be unable to grip a carton of eggs without crushing it if it hasn't been reprogrammed beforehand.

Adding tactile sensors

In order to multitask then, researchers have long sought the ability to add tactile sensors to robotic systems. It appears that this wish may now come true with the invention of such a sensor by chemical engineer Ravi Saraf and his graduate student Vivek Maheshwari from the University of Nebraska as described in the June 9 issue of the journal Science.

In order to "feel" an object, Maheshwari and Saraf created a small device composed of very thin, alternating conductive layers of gold and cadmium sulfide nanoparticles on top of an iridium-tin oxide (ITO) electrode. The top layer of the device is coated with plastic and acts like the sensor's fingertips, gauging an object's characteristics and then converting the sensor readings into a visual that is imaged by a charge-coupled device (CCD) camera hooked up to the ITO electrode. The engineers claim that their sensor will be less expensive than what's currently on the market since it can self-assemble at room temperature and is flexible enough to be shaped around contoured areas of different sizes.

Sensitive sensor

Maheshwari and Saraf tried to make their sensor as sensitive as that of a human fingertip and demonstrated their sensor's capabilities in the paper by having it "feel" the surface of an American penny. The images taken by the CCD when the coin simply placed on top of the sensor and then pressed down with minutely increasing levels of force demonstrate that as more pressure is applied, the resolution of the image, which would match up with the impressions that someone holding a coin between 2 fingers would receive as he increases the strength of his hold on it.

The tactile sensor Maheshwari and Saraf developed is a step toward the long-term goal of creating a dexterous robotic hand that functions like a human's; able to feel its way through an environment that can't be seen by the naked eye. For example, doctors performing microsurgery on a patient with the aid of tiny robotic systems armed with such sensors would be better able to distinguish not just organs but tissues or even cells by "feeling" out their shapes even though their own hands would be too big to fit into the incisions made.

In the University of Nebraska press release, Saraf envisions someday using more sensitive tactile sensors to help oncologists find out if they've been able to detect and remove all the cancer cells during an operation.

* * *

E-mail the author at massie@massie.com.

Observe prudence when substituting one drug for another, experts remind

By Charles E. Buban

COULD ALMOST TWO SIMILAR DRUG compounds deliver the same efficacy and tolerability? This is what amlodipine maleate manufacturers have asserted as they begin penetrating a market segment dominated by amlodipine besylate (Norvasc), a treatment for high blood pressure and chest pain treatment manufactured by Pfizer.

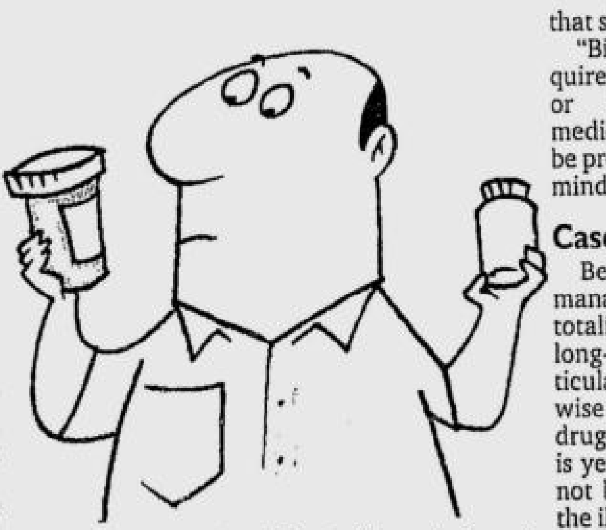
Amlodipine maleate is different from amlodipine besylate through a change in salt composition.

Recently, South African scientist Roger Karel Verbeeck said that amlodipine maleate possesses impurities that may have an impact on the performance of the drug compound.

"The maleate salt of amlodipine, unlike the besylate salt, suffers from intrinsic chemical instability which results in the formation of an impurity with demonstrated biological activity," Verbeeck recently reported before doctors in Makati City. He also mentioned that for other salts used with amlodipine, impurities might likewise result.

Further testing needed

He said that even if bioequivalence between two salt forms of medicines have been demonstrated and that any differences in chemical properties, such as solubility, between the two salts do not have any significant effect, Verbeeck warned this does not suffice to conclude that these preparations are therapeutically equivalent and as such, should warrant further testing of its toxicity and stability.



To be bioequivalent means that the compared medicine should be similar to its brand name counterpart in dosage form, safety, strength, route of administration, quality, performance characteristics and intended use.

Once the manufacturer has scientifically demonstrated that their product is bioequivalent to the pioneering medicine, the practice is that the company is no longer being required to replicate the extensive clinical trials that have already been used in the development of the pioneering medicine, making such modified drug accessible to the public without the benefit of being tried extensively.

However, Dr. Francisco Tranquilino, a cardiologist and a training officer at the Philippine General Hospital believes there are other things that should be considered in comparing the pioneering medicine with its generic counterpart or other new chemical entities that show similar therapeutic effect.

"Bioequivalence must not be the only requirement but more important is the clinical or therapeutic equivalence of these medicines. A drug's efficacy and safety must be proven based on valid clinical trials," he reminded in agreeing with Verbeeck's report.

Case's totality

Besides, Tranquilino explained that in managing patients, most doctors look at the totality of the case. "Doctors also consider the long-term effects and complications of a particular medicine on the illness. It may be costwise to prescribe a cheaper counterpart drug—and even before its efficacy and safety is yet to be proven—but in the end, we may not be able to prevent the complications of the illness if it worsens," he said.

The doctor added that hospitalizations and other endpoints must also be considered saying that if a modified drug or even a new chemical entity is unable to match the therapeutic efficacy and safety of the pioneering medicine, more expenses will be incurred in the long run.

For Tranquilino, the proven efficacy and safety of pioneering medicines and the evidences from landmark trials involving them will still make them popular despite the presence of its modified equivalents or new chemical entities that show similar therapeutic effect.

"Research should continue even when a pioneering medicine's patent expires, especially if there are still newer indications, enhancements that improve its efficacy or usage," he said.

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A culinary journey at Dusit Hotel Nikko's The Cafe

TAKE A SOJOURN AT DUSIT HOTEL NIKKO'S The Café and partake on an epicurean adventure to the best of Asian and Western cuisine this July and August 2006. The Café is your passport to dining heaven with its daily thematic buffet offerings.

Visit The Café for Mediterranean Mondays and discover the rich, layered yet unpretentious flavors of the Mediterranean and savor cuisine that spans from Morocco, Portugal, Spain, southern France, Italy and Greece.

Every Tuesday, embrace the mystique of the Orient, as The Café showcase a wide selection of popular Asian cuisine for a taste of its celebrated way of life and rich culture.

Excitement will run through your palates with the buffet selections of 'Flavors and Spices every Wednesday. The Café will feature various spices and curries in its dishes and gives you a sampling of "nonya" cooking of southern Asia.

Thursday is a day of sizzling meats, bodacious ribs and barbecues, 'Outback Thursdays' will not only showcase cooking of the "land down under," but will also include South American, Tex Mex style barbecues.

Take pleasure in an intimate dining experience every Friday as The Café features cuisine from the northern regions of France, Italy and other parts of eastern Europe with 'C 'est si Bon Fridays.'

For a true feel of a beach luau, The Café unveils an extensive selection of fresh ingredients for an on the spot grilling of your favorite meat and seafood items during 'Surf and Turf' Saturdays.

Sunday is indeed a special day for the whole family with The Café's 'Family Brunch Buffet.' Enjoy the best selection of Asian and International fare from all the thematic buffets.

The daily thematic buffets of the Café, is priced at only P950++ for adults and P475++ for children (5 to 12 years old) during lunch and dinner.

For inquiries and dining reservations, call Dusit Hotel Nikko at 867-3333.

All-day sumptuous dining only at Cafe Astoria

CAFÉ ASTORIA IS AN ALL-DAY DINING restaurant with a cool-modern ambiance and serves a selection of international and local cuisine. Whatever you choose, their ala carte menu is sure to have the perfect selection to get your day started. Pan Seared Lapu Lapu Fillet combined with tomato black bean puree and wok-fried kailan is a must try at the Café Astoria. Lunch buffet is served from Monday to Sunday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Ala carte menu is available all day seven days a week. Astoria Plaza is located at #15 J. Escriva Drive, Ortigas Business District, Pasig City. For inquiries and reservations call 687-1111 or visit www.astoriaplaza.com. Astoria Plaza is managed with distinction by Genesis Hotels and Resorts Corp.

Tin Hau unveils new menus

CHINESE CUISINE RECEIVES A BOOST from Mandarin Oriental, Manila as its premier Chinese restaurant Tin Hau introduces new a la carte and set menus that offer a variety of choices -- from Chinese roasting, dried seafood varieties and abalone, live and fresh seafood, meat, poultry, noodles and rice, to vegetarian dishes.

The exciting and extensive new offerings are the result of the combined expertise of Tin Hau's Chinese culinary team headed by executive Chinese chef Hann Furn Chen and restaurant manager Ernest Lau. Together they conceptualized and developed the wide selection of innovative and gustatory creations. Among the new dishes to check out are: Roaste pipa pigeon Cantonese style; Braised eight treasures' shark's fin soup; Stewed sea cucumber and fish maw with minced beef in Szechuan spicy sauce; Stewed eel with garlic, mushrooms and barbecue sauce; Stir-fried kung pao frog's legs with cashew nuts; Simmered oxtail in red wine sauce served with Chinese buns; Braised "Lo Han" chai wrapped in bean curd skin; and Chilled bird's nest with red dates, among many others.

Five new set menus have also been created, which start at P938+++ per person for a minimum of two persons. The Jasmine, Lotus, Emperor, Phoenix, and Mandarin, feature sumptuous selections ranging from eight to ten courses each, offering diners wide enough choices for various celebrations, including the Four happiness barbecue meat combination platter; Braised sea cucumbers and mushrooms with seasonal vegetables; Simmered pork ribs in Shao Xing wine served with steamed buns; Marinated baby pigeon in soy sauce; Wok-fried slipper lobsters with spring onion and ginger, to name some.

With the new menus, restaurant manager Lau who knows a discriminating Chinese food lover's palate through more than 20 years service in Hong Kong and Manila, says that beginning July 1, the restaurant rightfully focuses on its a la carte specialities, limiting its buffet only at lunch on Sundays to Fridays and at dinner on Saturday nights. This day also marks the debut of the tie-up with Lord Stow, when the creamy Portuguese tarts will be included in Tin Hau's and Mandarin Deli's regular dessert fare, with the option to pair it with Illy coffee, acclaimed by coffee lovers as one of the world's best.

Tin Hau's new stylish look with its vibrant peach-colored table linens and all-white bone china add to a new feel to the restaurant's warm and elegant look, adds Lau.

Set against the genre paintings and screens and antique Chinese period cabinets and vases, Tin Hau is reminiscent of an old-fashioned Chinese home with its residential and tranquil ambience.

Tin Hau delights diners with its new a la carte and set menus daily for lunch, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.; and dinner, 6:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. For enquiries and reservations, call Tin Hau at 750 8888 extension 2422 / 2424.

PGRV GROUNDBREAKING AND LAUNCHING

Philippine Estates Corp bagged the exclusive marketing of the 14-tower affordable residential condominiums in Valenzuela City. Shown in photo are James B. Palit-ang, chair and president of Noble Arch Realty & Construction Corp, developer of PGRV, with Jenny Gallego, marketing manager of Philippine Estates Corp, at the signing of their exclusive marketing agreement for the future selling of PGRV. Also in photo are (from left, back), Nestor Lim (project manager), Joshua Mazo and Roland Peralta (sales officers), and engineer Estrella Cequiña. The launching and groundbreaking ceremonies of this 14-tower affordable residential condominium project will be held on July 7, at the project site in Brgy. Maysan, Valenzuela City starting 9:30 a.m. Everybody is invited.

People, Events & Products

Aktivade: Advocating health through fitness and sporting events

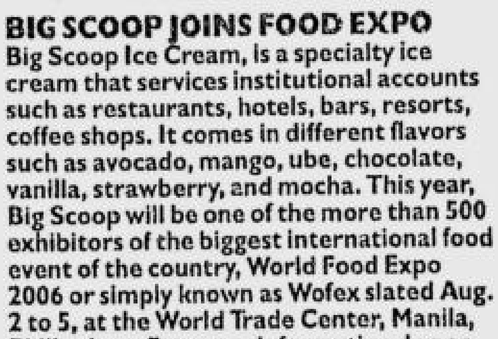
HEALTH AND FITNESS ARE ESSENtial to everyday living. With the fast-paced life that Filipinos are starting to get used to, it is relevant to take some break and assess physical well being. One must maintain health in order to adjust to the changing demands of living and in turn live a productive life. Aktivade, the preferred sports drink, remains staunch to its health advocacy through sporting events and other activities aimed at promoting healthy living.

Aktivade sponsored the recently concluded "Century Tuna Superbods Beach Fest" that launched Century Tuna's first-ever search for people with undeniable X factor and passion for healthy and clean living as its next image models at Pier One in Boracay.

Aktivade also sponsored the 3rd Boracay International Dragon Boat Races - the forthcoming biggest international Dragonboat competition in Asia - sanctioned by the Philippine Dragon Boat Federation. The event was made more extensive and challenging for the competitors as event organizers and counterparts agreed to create a circuit for paddlers worldwide that started in Hong Kong in the first week of May, followed by Boracay in the second week, and Penang on the last week.

Be it a fitness and fun-filled activity or intensified competition, Aktivade serves as the best sports drink. Formulated to quickly restore fluid, minerals, and energy that the body loses during prolonged exercise and activities, taking Aktivade ensures staying fit to confront daily regimen of physical endeavors.

For more details about Aktivade, please check www.aktivade.com.



BIG SCOOP JOINS FOOD EXPO

Big Scoop Ice Cream, is a specialty ice cream that services institutional accounts such as restaurants, hotels, bars, resorts, coffee shops. It comes in different flavors such as avocado, mango, ube, chocolate, vanilla, strawberry, and mocha. This year, Big Scoop will be one of the more than 500 exhibitors of the biggest international food event of the country, World Food Expo 2006 or simply known as Wofex slated Aug. 2 to 5, at the World Trade Center, Manila, Philippines. For more information, log on to www.wofex.com or call 929-7993, 435-4790, 920-8136, 929-7963, 426-9603, or e-mail info@PEPGroup.com.

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INVITATION TO BID

The Agusan del Sur Electric Cooperative, Inc., an electric cooperative with Main Office address located at San Francisco, Agusan del Sur, invites all qualified suppliers to bid for the purchase of one (1) unit brand new 5 MVA Power Transformer; Brand - Shihlin, Taiwan.

Pre-bidding conference shall be conducted on July 12, 2006, 9:00 in the morning at the ASELCO Main Office Board Room, San Francisco, Agusan del Sur. Opening of sealed bids shall be done on the same date and venue at 1:00 in the afternoon in the presence of bidders' representatives, Procurement, Bids, and Awards Committee, and witnesses. Bidders are required to pay a non refundable fee in the amoun of Php 1,000.00 for the bid documents.

Interested bidders may visit the office or call Engr. Leonilo A. Lolong, PBAC Chair for more information.

(Sgd.) **URSULO E. ANUTA**
Manager

(PDI--June 30 & July 1, 2006)

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INVITATION FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION AND FOR BIDS

The Ilocos Norte Electric Cooperative, Inc. has applied for a loan from the Development Bank of the Philippines to finance the construction of its 69 KV power line and invites electrical contractors who are PCAB registered to apply for pre-qualification and to submit bids for the said project:

The project includes the furnishing of labor and materials for the construction of about 37 Kilometers of 69 KV line in the Province of Ilocos Norte.

Interested contractors and suppliers may obtain their pre-qualification forms and bid documents from the INEC main office starting July 17, 2006.

Pre-qualification documents must be received by this office not later than August 07, 2006. Only those pre-qualified shall be invited to bid for the project.

INEC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defect or informality, assume no obligation whatsoever of indemnity to the bidders any expense or loss that the bidder may incur in the preparations of its bid and to accept the bid most advantageous to INEC.

(Sgd.) **ROMILLAS C. PASCUAL**
General Manager

(PDI – July 1, 2 & 3, 2006)

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INVITATION FOR BIDS

The Ilocos Norte Electric Cooperative, Inc. is inviting proposals for the supply and delivery of an **ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE** customized for electric cooperatives.

The project includes the training of personnel and on a complete and operational with after sales support basis.

Interested suppliers may send their proposals starting July 10, 2006 until July 14, 2006 addressed to:

THE BAC CHAIRMAN
Ilocos Norte Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Suyo, Dingras, Ilocos Norte

INEC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defect or informality, assume no obligation whatsoever of indemnity to the bidders any expense or loss that the bidder may incur in the preparations of its bid and to accept the bid most advantageous to INEC.

(Sgd.) **ROMILLAS C. PASCUAL**
General Manager

(PDI – July 1, 2 & 3, 2006)

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A Subsidiary of Bases Conversion Development Authority

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Consultancy Services for the Detailed Engineering Design
of the San Fernando Airport

The proposed development covers an approximate land area of 40 hectares. The facilities to be designed by the consultant shall include the aircraft movement area (runway, taxiway and apron), Navigational aids, airfield lighting system, perimeter fence, control tower, crash and fire rescue facilities, passenger terminal building, administrative building, vehicular parking area, and drainage, water, power and communication systems. The preparation of engineering and architectural designs and the construction of these facilities shall be in accordance with the Standard and Recommended Practices of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and other applicable and present engineering standard, codes and practices available. The design covers structural, architectural, electrical, sanitary, mechanical, security and other related disciplines.

The Poro Point Management Corporation (PPMC), intends to apply the sum of **Nine Million Two Hundred Thirty Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty Seven and 50/100 Pesos (Php 9,230,887.50)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for **Consultancy Services for the Detailed Engineering Design of the San Fernando Airport**. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at opening of the financial proposals.

The PPMC, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), now invites Letters of Intent (LOI) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility and short listing for Consultancy Services for the Detailed Engineering Design of the San Fernando Airport. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis. The deadline for submission of eligibility documents shall be on or before July 14, 2006. Only those Consultants that are short-listed will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents. Completion of the project is required within 4 months from the receipt of Notice to Proceed.

The BAC shall draw up the short list of Consultants from those who have been determined as eligible, and who have submitted their expressions of interest, both in accordance with the provisions of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) Part A of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184). The short list shall consist of five (5) Consultants. Below are the criteria and rating system for short listing of Consultants:

• Firm Experience and Track Record	50 points
• Technical Staff Experience	50 points

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the IRR Part A of R.A. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least a sixty percent (60%) interest belonging to Citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with IRR Part A of R.A. 9184, only Proposals from short listed Consultants will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in the Bidding Document, Instructions to Consultants. In accordance with the IRR Part A of R.A. No. 9184, a contract will only be awarded to the Highest Rated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such after post-qualification.

The PROCURING ENTITY shall evaluate the proposals from the shortlisted firms using the Quality-Cost Based Evaluation (QCBE) procedure. The criteria and rating system for the evaluation of proposals are:

• Technical Proposal	60%
• Financial Proposal	40%

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

BAC ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letter of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	July 7 & 10, 2006
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	July 7 & 10, 2006
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	July 14, 2006
4. Notice of Result of Eligibility Check	July 21, 2006
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	July 24, 2006
6. Pre-Bid Conference	July 27, 2006
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	August 8, 2006

The BAC shall issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at PPMC Administration Building, PPSEFZ, Poro, City of San Fernando, La Union, and upon the submission of LOI, and upon their payment of non-refundable amount of three thousand pesos (Php 3,000.00) to the PPMC Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the eligibility requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue bidding documents only to the bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of five thousand pesos (Php 5,000.00) to the PPMC Cashier.

The Poro Point Management Corporation reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) ATTY. ANTHONY C. MANGUIAT
Vice President, PPMC and Chairman, BAC

(PDI – June 24 & July 1, 2006)

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OBITUARIES

Engr. MAXIMIANO C. SORIANO, JR.

of Dagupan City, SFDM, Q.C. & Beverly Hills, Antipolo City
died in Las Vegas, NV. on June 15, 2006 at the age of 74.

His loving wife **Dr. Teresita Carlos**; his children: **Loribeth Soriano-Mejia** and **Melvin P. Soriano**; his parents **Maximiano F. Soriano, Sr.** (†) & **Angela B. Castillo** (†); his siblings and in-laws: **Eufemia** (†) & **Dr. Romualdo Tadena, Sr.** (†), **Jacinto Servo & Rosita Fernandez, Ma. Salud** (†) & **Engr. Casimiro Bacugan, Sr., Gloria & Augusto Cruz, Angel & Lilia de Guzman, Praxedes & John Torres, Franderoose & Olivia Cachero**; his nephews, nieces, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Tuesday, July 4, 2006 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at La Funeraria Paz, Quezon City.

I am
the way,
the truth
and
the life.
No one
comes
to the
Father
except
through
Me.
John 14:6

CONSUELO RUNEZ CORONEL

Peacefully joined our Lord
on June 28, 2006 at the age of 71.

Her loving husband, **Narding**; children, **Bradley** and **Doris, Alfred, Diane** and **Bong**; grandchildren, **Bryan, Mari** and **Cheska**; brothers, **Richie** and **Rudy** (†); sisters, **Rose, Fin** and **Merci** give thanks to the Lord for the blessing of her life.

Her remains lie in state at the Mr. Carmel Church, New Manila, Quezon City.

Cremation will be tomorrow, July 2, 2006 after the 10:00 a.m. Mass at the La Funeraria Paz Crematorium.

TAN SIU GIN

(NENA TAN JAO)

of Sta. Cruz, Marinduque & Manila
Peacefully joined her Creator on June 29, 2006
at the age of 96.

Her beloved husband, **Jao Bio Chiong** (†); loving children **Sancho & Isabel, Eufronio (Efren) & Mary, Renato (Rene) & Maxima, Adalia & Victor Uy** (†), **Dionisio (Jun) & Rosario, Helen** (†) **& Henry Tan, Liberato (Levi) & Ana Maria**; grandchildren & great grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel 1 (Ascencion), La Funeraria Paz, C.M. Recto Ave., Manila.

Interment will be on Thursday, July 6, 2006 at Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque at 1:00 p.m.

Valentin "Ito" M. Ventura

of Aparri, Cagayan

His wife **Annie**; loving children **Peachy** and **Jun, Jun-jun** and **Irene, Macky** and **Mario, Chito** and **Mima, Freddie** and **Marge**; grandchildren **Gelo, Bea, Issa, Clarice, Elrick, Michie, Marga, Anika, Joriz, Twins**; brother **Fermin**, nephews and nieces and other relatives request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel 2, Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

Interment will be at the Loyola Memorial Park,
Marikina after the 4:00 p.m. Mass
tomorrow, July 2, 2006.

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

Message of Thanks

For visiting us and being with us in our time of sorrows...
For praying with us and for us...
For the Mass cards and messages of sympathy and condolence...
For the beautiful flowers to express compassion...
For joining us in our nightly vigils...
For attending the Masses and funeral rites...
For thinking of us in our hour of grief...
For all that you have done to console our hearts...

Our sincerest gratitude.
From the family of the late

REMEDIOS VILLENA BUNDA

of Noveleta, Cavite

Conchita (Chit) Morales Sebial

Peacefully joined our Lord
on June 29, 2006 at the age of 60.

Her loving husband **Armin "AKS"**; her children **Francis, Patrick, Brian** and **Jan**; her brother, sisters, in-laws, nephews, nieces and relatives give thanks to the Lord for the blessing of her life.

She lies in state at the Agoncillo Chapel, La Funeraria Paz-Sucat, Parañaque.

Interment will be tomorrow, July 2, 2006 after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at Manila Memorial Park, Sucat.

BUSINESS

Foreign debt up 2.1% to $55.3B

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES' FOREIGN DEBT STOCK rose 2.1 percent to $55.3 billion or 53.9 percent of the country's domestic output as of end-March due to the issuance of new debt paper.

Last January, the national government issued $2.1 billion in global bonds to take advantage of lower interest rates in the foreign debt market.

Partly due to substantial borrowings made early this year, the share of public sector accounts to total outstanding external debt rose by less than a percentage point during the quarter to reach 68.2 percent.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the maturity profile of the country's debt remained favorable, with medium and long-term accounts accounting for 89 percent of the total.

These loans, with original tenors of more than one year, had a weighted average maturity of 17.6 years.

Public sector borrowings had a longer average term of 20 years, compared to 10.2 years for the private sector.

Official creditors consisting of multilateral and bilateral institutions accounted for 38.9 percent of total debt, followed by foreign holders of bonds and notes at 33.9 percent, and foreign banks and other financial institutions, at 21.8 percent.

For the first quarter of 2006, the BSP also reported that the country's external debt service ratio, or the percentage of total principal and interest payments to total exports of goods and receipts from services and income, further improved to 12.7 percent from 13.3 percent in December and 14.9 percent a year ago.

"The ratio, which remained well below the 20 percent international benchmark, indicates that the country has sufficient foreign exchange earnings to service current maturities of its foreign obligations," Tetangco said.

Japanese more optimistic

Jetro survey shows slight improvement in sentiment

By Ronnel W. Domingo

JAPANESE FIRMS' BUSINESS SENTIment on the country improved by a hair's breadth from last months' four-year-low of negative 15.5, according to a monthly survey by Japan External Trade Organization.

The survey showed that Japanese firms doing business in the country gave the business environment a rating of negative 15.4 and that the outlook would hit a negative 10.4.

The ratings measure year-on-year changes in business outlook for the current month and the next two or three months. The ratings are expressed as diffusion indices, which show the difference between positive and negative responses.

Philippine ratings reached negative 25.8 in March 2002, bottomed at negative 40.9 in December 2001 and peaked at an all-time high of 22.9 in September 2004 before dipping to current ratings.

According to Jetro's latest poll, local ratings reflected those in the region as sentiment for the five original members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations reached negative 8, keeping it on the downside for the seventh straight month.

Indonesia received the worst rating at negative 31.4 while Singapore earned the only positive diffusion index at 19.4.

Jetro said its latest survey contained a new question about whether prices and interest rates had an impact on respondents' current business sentiment.

About 57 percent of respondents linked price rises to falling sentiment, while some 34 percent blamed rising interest rates.

Jetro explained that the aim of the survey was to provide up-to-date information on business conditions in the Asian economy to help companies develop more effective business strategies.

Singson Jr. leaves BSP

FINANCE UNDERSECRETARY GABRIEL Singson Jr., who was in charge of the government's privatization efforts, has quit his post to join the private sector.

"I just felt it was time to move on. But I am grateful for the opportunity to serve in government," Singson, son of former BSP Governor Gabriel Singson, said yesterday, his last day at the Department of Finance.

Singson joined the DOF in February last year.

He headed the government's team that worked on the privatization of state-owned assets like the Philippine National Bank, and the former Manila Gas and International School sites.

After failed attempts to privatize the former IS property, the government finally sold it last month.

The 48,832-square meter prime property in Makati City was sold for P1.432 billion.

The national government and the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. was also able to generate P8.14 billion from the sale of Philippine National Bank.

Another P574 million was generated from the sale of the former Manila Gas property in Manila.

He said that the privatization team at the DOF would continue working on the sale of other government-owned assets.

Already in the pipeline are the Al-Amanah Savings Bank and government shares in Maynilad.

"There's a very competent team now in place to take charge of privatization," he said.

Singson said Teves has already accepted his resignation.

Prior to his stint at the DOF, Singson was chair of investment firm SR Capital Holdings Inc. and held executive posts in companies including Macondray & Co. Inc, where he served as chief operating officer. Macondray is the holdings firm of Del Monte.

The resignation of Singson followed the recent resignation of the Jose A.R. Bengzon III, head of the Privatization Management Office (PMO), which also helps government in the privatization program.

Michelle V. Remo

Further rise in excise taxes under study

By Michelle V. Remo

FINANCE SECRETARY MARGARITO Teves said the government could look at further increasing the excise taxes on cigarettes and alcohol to shore up revenues.

Teves said that although the government just implemented an excise tax hike last year, there was room for another increase.

He noted that the excise tax rates in the Philippines were lower than in other countries.

"In the case of sin products, we (Filipino consumers) are still one of the least taxed. This is one area where there is room for adjustment of the rates," Teves said in an interview.

The Sin Tax Law, or Republic Act No. 9334, increased the excise tax rates on cigarettes to the following: P2 a pack for cigarettes costing below P5 a pack and P6.35 for those costing between P5 and P6.50.

For cigarette packs costing more than P6.50 but not more than P10, the excise tax rate a pack is P10.35; and for cigarette packs costing more than P10, the applicable tax is P25 per pack.

The Sin Tax Law was part of the fiscal reform agenda strongly pushed for legislation by the Arroyo administration to help meet the medium-term goal of a balanced budget.

Fiscal authorities were originally eyeing much higher excise tax rates, but were later on forced to agree on what were deemed as watered down rates amid lengthy debates and opposition by industry players that opposed the fiscal reform measure.

Teves said that despite the implementation of other revenue-raising measures, more are still needed to ensure that the government is kept on track to meet its fiscal targets.

But the finance chief was quick to add that any legislative proposals, including the one to further increase the excise tax rates, would have to be studied first and discussed in detail next year the earliest.

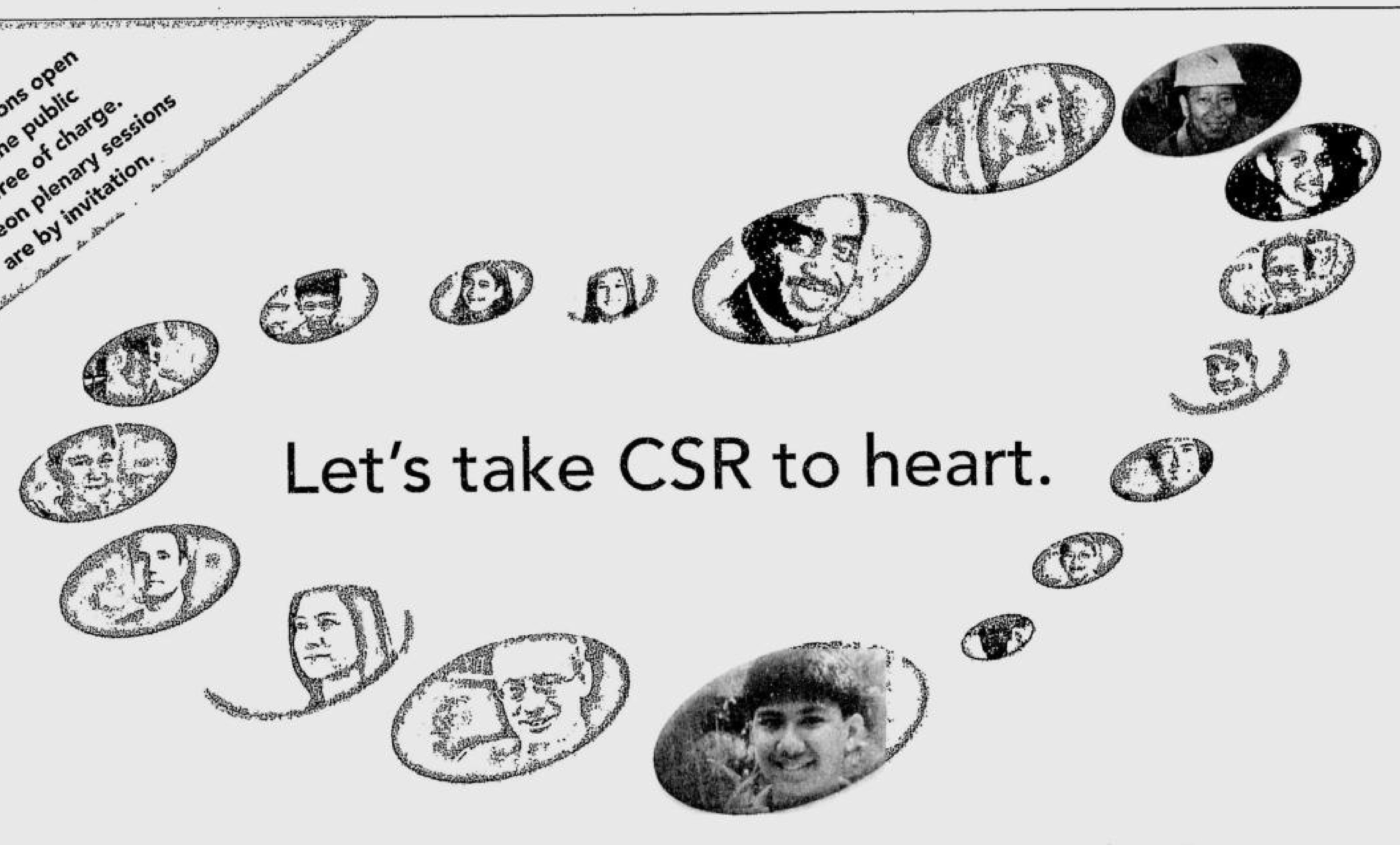
Teves said that while raising excise tax rates was a practical measure to study, there was no urgency in lobbying for it in Congress.

He said the Department of Finance and its attached revenue-collecting agencies*the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs*would focus this year solely on generating the expected revenues from fiscal reform measures that have already been in place.

Existing measures include the VAT Reform Law, which expanded the coverage of the value-added tax and raised the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent, and tightening of tax auditing by the BIR.

Teves said efforts of fiscal authorities this year should be dedicated to improving revenue-collection efficiency of both revenue-collecting agencies to meet the 2006 fiscal target of reducing the budget deficit to only P125 billion from last year's P146.8 billion.

All sessions open to the public are free of charge. Luncheon plenary sessions are by invitation.



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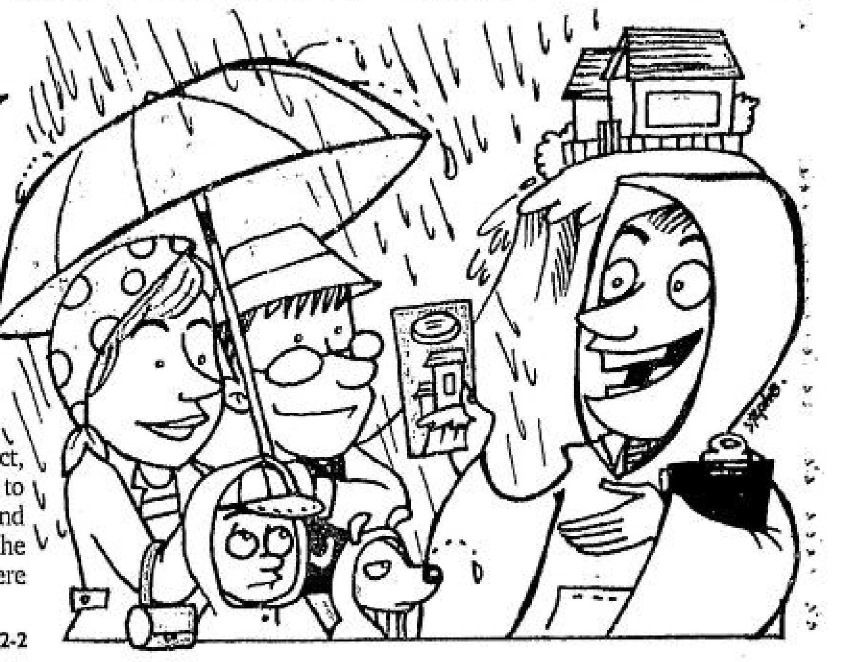
PROPERTY

Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**

Rains can be property buyers' best ally



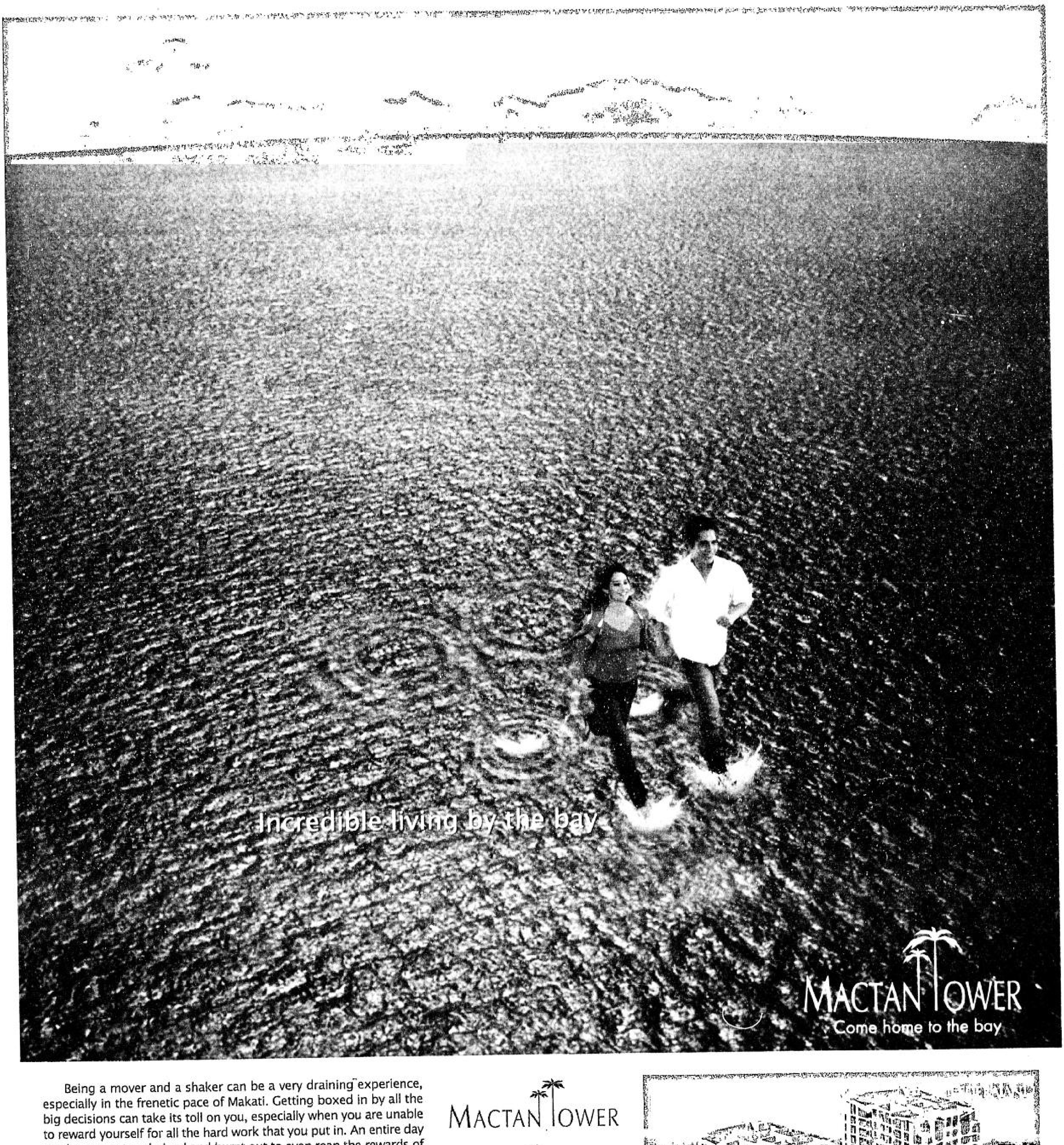
By Tessa R. Salazar

HEAVY RAINS CAN CERtainly trigger floods, damage roads and generally soak everyone in a gloomy mood. But should they keep property buyers from the hunt?

Apparently not. Property experts say that, on the contrary, the onset of the rainy season should be the perfect time to look for property—whether you're planning to buy a vacant lot, a beach home, commercial property or a residential home. The inclement weather will let you see things you wouldn't see during the dry season.

Amado de Jesus, a practising green architect, says that the rainy season is the best time to check for soil erosion and poor sewerage and drainage system in the area. He asks, "If the next lot is higher, especially at the back, where does water flow? Does it flow into your lot?"

RAINS/B2-2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Being a mover and a shaker can be a very draining experience, especially in the frenetic pace of Makati. Getting boxed in by all the big decisions can take its toll on you, especially when you are unable to reward yourself for all the hard work that you put in. An entire day can leave you too drained and burnt out to even reap the rewards of your success.

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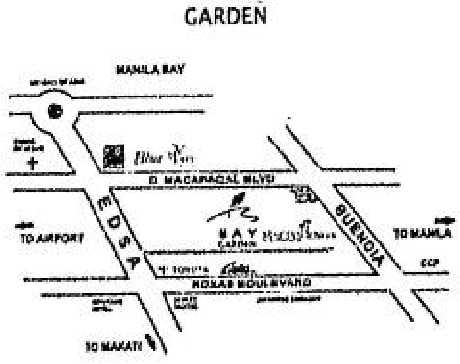
at
BAY GARDEN



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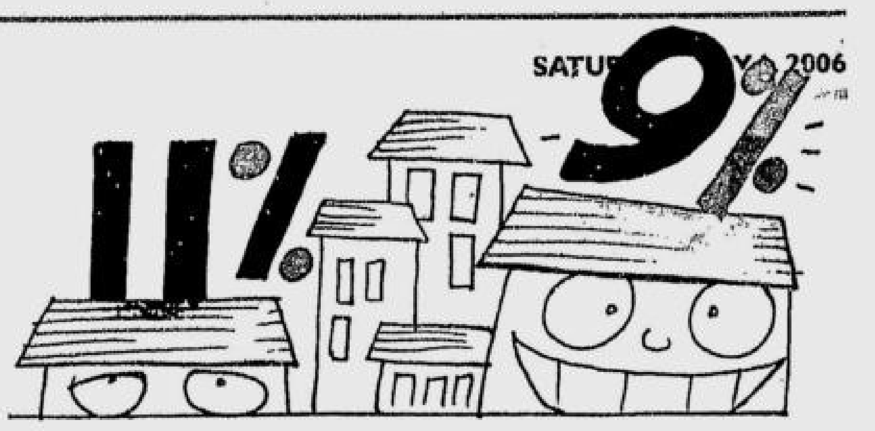
Developers ask further decrease of interest rates



By Charles E. Buban

THE HOME DEVELOPment Mutual Fund, more popularly known as the Pag-Ibig Fund, has recently lowered its interest rates on socialized housing loans from 11 percent to nine percent.

But for a number of developers around the country, such a reduction is still not enough.

"A lot of our home buyers today have very little disposable income to invest in housing as they are feeling the impact of the rising cost of living brought about by the ever-increasing prices of fuel, food and other commodities," said Ed Alunan, Subdivision and Housing Developers Association national VP, who is also president of Bacolod-based developer, Alunan Realty.

He said that despite Pag-Ibig's posting a record P7.38 billion net income in 2005—the highest in its 25-year history—the agency's present interest rate is comparable to what some private financial institutions and banks are offering for some high-end real estate developments (at 9.5 percent).

Poor sales mark

Delays in loan approval and inability to complete the payment have resulted in poor sales mark of socialized housing projects, reported Alunan adding that as a result, many of its member developers fell short of their sales target with regard to their socialized housing projects.

"Pag-Ibig is mandated to provide cheap and affordable housing and lowering the interest rate to nine percent may not be enough. I strongly believe that if the agency further reduces its rates to five percent, such a scenario would encourage more of Pag-Ibig members to invest in real properties," Alunan said.

Aside from the suggestion to lower socialized housing loan to five percent, Alunan also suggested adjusting the low-cost housing loan (amounting to P750,000) to seven percent interest rate, and economic housing (amounting up to P2 million) to nine percent interest rate would also be beneficial.

Amortization level

He expounded that at five percent level, the monthly amortization for a 25-year term housing loan will drop to P1,750 (as compared to P2,520 of nine percent).

"There are several benefits that could be enjoyed if this is implemented including making socialized housing (package amounting to P300,000) attractive to more families; increase the rate of home construction throughout the country (thus, benefiting other industries and the economy in general considering that housing carries a high multiplier effect); as well as developers would encounter fewer buy backs," explained Alunan.

He added that across the Asean region, interest rates are going for as low as three percent (for the socialized class), so Pag-Ibig would have a comparison.

Interest rates vary

In its defense, Jaime Fabiana, Pag-Ibig Fund deputy chief executive and EVP, during the recent Developers' Forum in Bacolod City, explained that interest rates vary based on market rates of every country adding that any rate reduction will affect Pag-Ibig's entire portfolio.

He also explained that housing borrowers account for only five percent of the total six million Pag-Ibig members (the rest are composed of savers) and any reduction in the agency's income will affect the members' dividends.

In response, Alunan offered another idea: "What if Pag-Ibig take out 100,000 socialized housing units? The interest rate 'subsidy' would only cost the agency P76.382 million a month or P916.584 million for one year. I believe this could easily be accommodated considering, Pag-Ibig's huge earnings.

"Let us remember that there are 3.8 million Filipino families in need of a descent shelter. If we could make socialized housing—as well as the low cost and economic home packages—more attractive, we may be able to decrease this number significantly," hoped Alunan.

UST campus at Georgia Club highlights Laguna's growth

UST Board member and business taipan Lucio Tan led the ceremonial transfer of seedlings from UST Manila to its new 45-hectare campus in Sta. Rosa.

THE RECENT GROUNDBREAKING FOR the new University of Sto. Tomas campus, to be located a stone throw away from Brittany Corp.'s exclusive Georgia Club community in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, underscores the economic growth and importance of the metro south. The groundbreaking for the 45-hectare campus was attended by business taipan Lucio Tan, a member of the UST Board, as well as other business and government leaders.

The soon-to-rise campus represents a major investment and addition to the educational community in the region, with a teaching hospital and facilities that will offer degree programs in health care, and other university degree programs to produce graduates who will be able to find good employment in the region, now one of the country's brightest economic growth areas.

The lineup of quality academic institutions in Laguna which UST will join includes De La Salle University–Canlubang, St. Scholastica's College, Don Bosco and the Ateneo Graduate School, as well as Acacia School which offers pre-school education.

Gross income leader

THE Ashbury model home evokes a feel of the Old American South with its gabled roofs, tall evenly spaced windows, dormers, and high ceiling.

Laguna, the first province south of the metro, is home to 17 industrial estates that account for a large share of the country's exports. In fiscal year 2004, Laguna led all local government units nationwide in gross income, with more than P1.3 billion. Its municipalities of Biñan and Cabuyao ranked second and third nationwide with gross incomes of P500 million and P443 million, respectively, in the municipality category.

For its part, the municipality of Sta. Rosa, one of the country's fastest growing investment sites, is an ideal place of residence for professionals and their families. Dubbed the "Silicon Valley" of the Philippines, and the IT hub of the South because of the electronics and semiconductor firms in the area, Sta. Rosa is also known as the country's "Little Detroit," being the home of major car manufacturers and assemblers.

Laguna is endowed with an advantageous natural topography and environment that includes plentiful underground water reserves pegged at 300 million gallons, and a host of leisure and vacation destinations.

Brittany CEO Jing Serrano said the location of the UST campus adjacent to Georgia Club is part of the master-planning for the upscale community. "We have picked locations in the south, such as Sta. Rosa, for key reasons. There is land available for the development of upscale communities, freedom from congestion and pollution, and compared to the north, east and west of Metro Manila, there is a better road network," she added.

Various advantages

The new UST campus together with Georgia Club offers various advantages, such as refreshing, secluded environs with a scenic view of Mt. Makiling, the proximity of leisure facilities like Sta. Elena Golf and Country Club, and being able to avoid traffic from industrialized areas of Laguna.

Georgia Club is envisioned to attract executives of industrial enterprises in the metro south as well as up-market families with business and professional interests in Makati and places farther south. A partnership venture between Brittany and the Quiros family, Georgia Club is a milestone in the property sector, especially with the new UST campus to be built within it, underscoring the rapid business, industrial and residential development in the area.

Avida tailors home loans to fit customers' needs

WITH INTEREST RATES ON HOME loans plunging to new lows, residential buyers are being offered a range of options by financial institutions and real estate developers to entice them to buy that dream home. Not since the 1997 financial crisis have interest rates been this low, according to Didit Mauricio, head of Buyer's Financing Unit of Avida Land Corp.

Mauricio attributes the downward spiral of interest rates to low T-Bill rates and the keen competition in the banking industry. Indirectly affecting the interest rates is the strong inflow of OFW remittances, which helps strengthen the peso resulting in lower interest rates.

Financing schemes

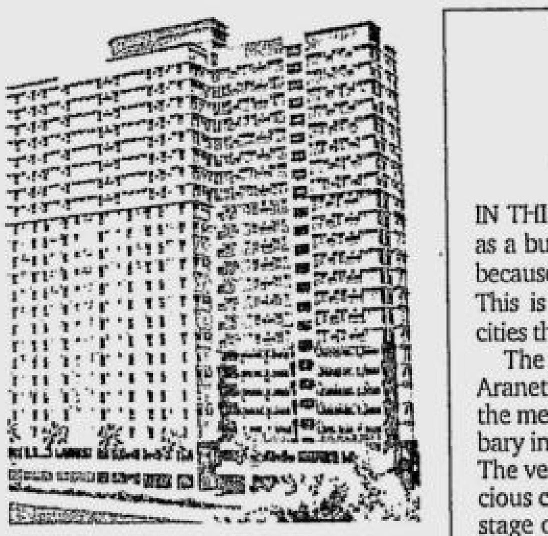
Avida Land, for instance, offers various financing schemes so that the prospective homeowner can cover the standard down payment of 20 percent of the total price and the monthly installment payments of the balance spread over 15 years at the maximum. It is the leading developer of affordable homes in the P1 to P3 million price range with projects in 13 locations in Metro Manila and selected provinces.

Avida Land studies have revealed that home buyers have the financial capacity to pay the monthly amortization which could be less than P10,000 spread over 10 years for a studio unit. However, most of them would have difficulty raising the 20 percent down payment.

To ease the burden, the leading developer in the affordable sector has two financing schemes to cover the 80 percent bulk of the package as well as the required down payment.

For bank financing, which is the most popular option, the Avida home buyer can spread the 20 percent equity over a period ranging from eight to 12 months, discloses Mauricio. The remaining 80 percent can be paid in monthly amortizations over a period of up to 10 years with a fixed interest rate of 11.5 percent. Interest rates have not been this kind to prospective homeowners in years, points out Mauricio. In 1997, she recalls real estate loans reached a momentary peak of 36 percent.

A second Avida option makes use of in-house financing and allows the 20 percent down payment to be spread over 12 months for a 0 percent interest rate fee. The remaining 80 percent balance is payable from five to 10 years with an 18 percent interest rate—the lowest in-house financing rate in the industry. Other developers usually charge 20-24 percent, notes Mauricio.



AVIDA Land's easy payment options offer various financing schemes that can cover the down payment and the monthly installment payments of the balance for condo units like the Avida Towers New Manila.

Beyond these financing schemes, Avida Land can tailor fit a financing scheme for potential home buyers depending on their income level and expected cash flow.

For the month of June, Avida Land gave a seasonal bonus knowing full well that most homeowners would be also be paying tuition expenses. Those who make reservations this month will enjoy a 50 percent reduced reservation fee of P10,000 and up to 75 percent discount based on the first monthly amortization for the deferred 20 percent down payment.

One of a kind columbary structure being built in QC

IN THIS 21ST CENTURY, THE COLUMBARY as a burial option is gaining popularity anew because burial space is fast becoming scarce. This is particularly true of highly urbanized cities the world over, Metro Manila included.

The Ascension Columbary is now rising on Araneta Avenue in Quezon City to provide the metropolis with the most modern columbary in the country to date as a burial option. The very first structure of what will be a spacious cluster of buildings comprising the first stage of The Ascension Columbary is targeted for completion in November.

Architectural landmark

The Ascension Columbary will be an architectural landmark characterized by a landscape with a modern take on an ancient type of building. The said first structure is envisioned to have a look of an elegant, dignified shaped wonder done in off-white colors .

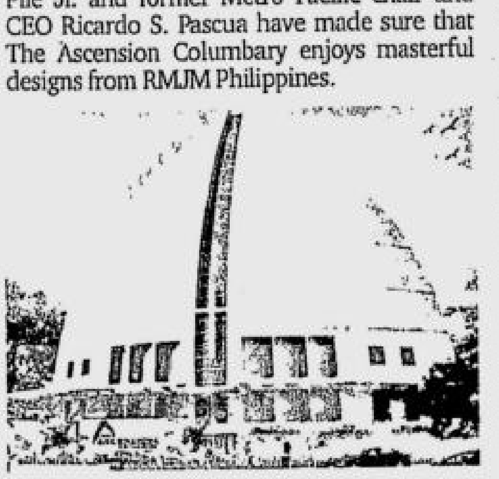
Jojo Tolentino, president and CEO of RMJM Philippines, the architectural firm tasked to design the one-of-a-kind building, stressed that the design of The Ascension was specifically an off-take from the artistic metaphor which is that of a bishop's miter.

Bishop's miter

The Bishop's miter, he said, is enlarged to the nth degree which is placed on the ground with windows and doors and glass accents on mainly off-white concrete that is finally accentuated with unadorned cross.

The miter on the ground will be a five-story structure housing a reception area and function rooms on the first floor—all designed to be welcoming to those visiting their dear departed. The second floor will have a nondenominational chapel where services of various religious faiths can be held even as said space will serve as a regular church for the community the columbary will be part of. Third, fourth and fifth floors will contain the vaults where urns will be kept.

Developers of The Ascension project, particularly its president and chair, Celedonio A. Pile Jr. and former Metro Pacific chair and CEO Ricardo S. Pascua have made sure that The Ascension Columbary enjoys masterful designs from RMJM Philippines.



THE ASCENSION COLUMBARY

Rains can be property...

From page B2-1

According to De Jesus, some subdivisions have poor drainage systems. During storms, flood water pours into the next subdivision.

Siltation problem

Alexis A. Acacio, an associate professor of civil engineering at the University of the Philippines, says that visiting the site during the rains will show the area's traffic behavior as well. It would also show if the roads have a siltation problem (prone to developing mud). Mud on the road is a telltale indication of the "looseness" of the soil where the road is situated. One should first look at the "ingress and egress" of the location, or the accessibility of the location as access roads are as important as the site itself.

More important, rains would betray the area's vulnerability to landslides.

"The difficult realities you will see during the rainy season," he stresses.

Tell-tale signs

Aside from ocular inspection, Acacio adds that potential buyers should ask residents if the area floods when it rains. Two tell-tale signs of chronic flooding are the presence of sandbags and unusually elevated homes in the area.

The rainy season can also reveal poorly maintained, thus dangerous, electrical systems. However, electrical inspections should be conducted with the assistance of professionals, Acacio stresses.

Another indicator is a wet ceiling, which would hint of a leaky roof.

"When it is not raining, be watchful of watermarks in the ceiling. These are signs of a defective roof system," Acacio says.

Acacio also mentions porous walls, firewalls and walls that are continuously exposed to rainfall manifest leaks and moisture if they are not properly made and maintained.

If a property is adjacent or near a river or lake, check the site during heavy rainfall and watch for overflows.

Also take note of warped cabinets. If the wall behind the cabinet has a water leak, then the wooden cabinet would naturally warp.

Thorough inspection

Civil engineer Enrico Cruz, lecturer of the Urban Institute of Real Estate and Construction, advises property buyers to conduct a thorough inspection of the location, and if possible to do it with a certified civil engineer.

Cruz also agrees that interviewing residents would be helpful in understanding the advantages and risks in the area.

"For example, if garbage seems to ramp up, that could be attributed to flooding," Cruz reveals.

CONSTRUCTSCOPE

Cebu launch Virtuoso Silk Touch

PERCEIVED AS THE BIGGEST BREAKTHROUGH IN THE LOCAL PAINT MARKET BY TOP ARCHITECTS and interior designers today, Virtuoso Silk Touch elicited positive feedback from partners and clients after the live demonstration of its easy clean feature.

The latest buzz in the paint industry has finally reached the south. Boysen Philippines' latest innovation received the warmest appreciation at the Cebu launch of Virtuoso Silk Touch during the 4th Philippine Building and Construction Expo (Philbex).

Virtuoso Silk Touch, the latest innovation of Pacific Paint Boysan Philippines, is a combination of Boysen's superior paint quality and Du Pont's Teflon wonders. Together with its low odor and low-VOC properties, Virtuoso Silk Touch is the first luxury paint in the Philippine market today.

"This is an amazing discovery that will solve the long time headache of architects when it comes to paint," said architect Topy Vasquez, owner of T. I. Vasquez Architect and Planners.

Exclusive promotions package

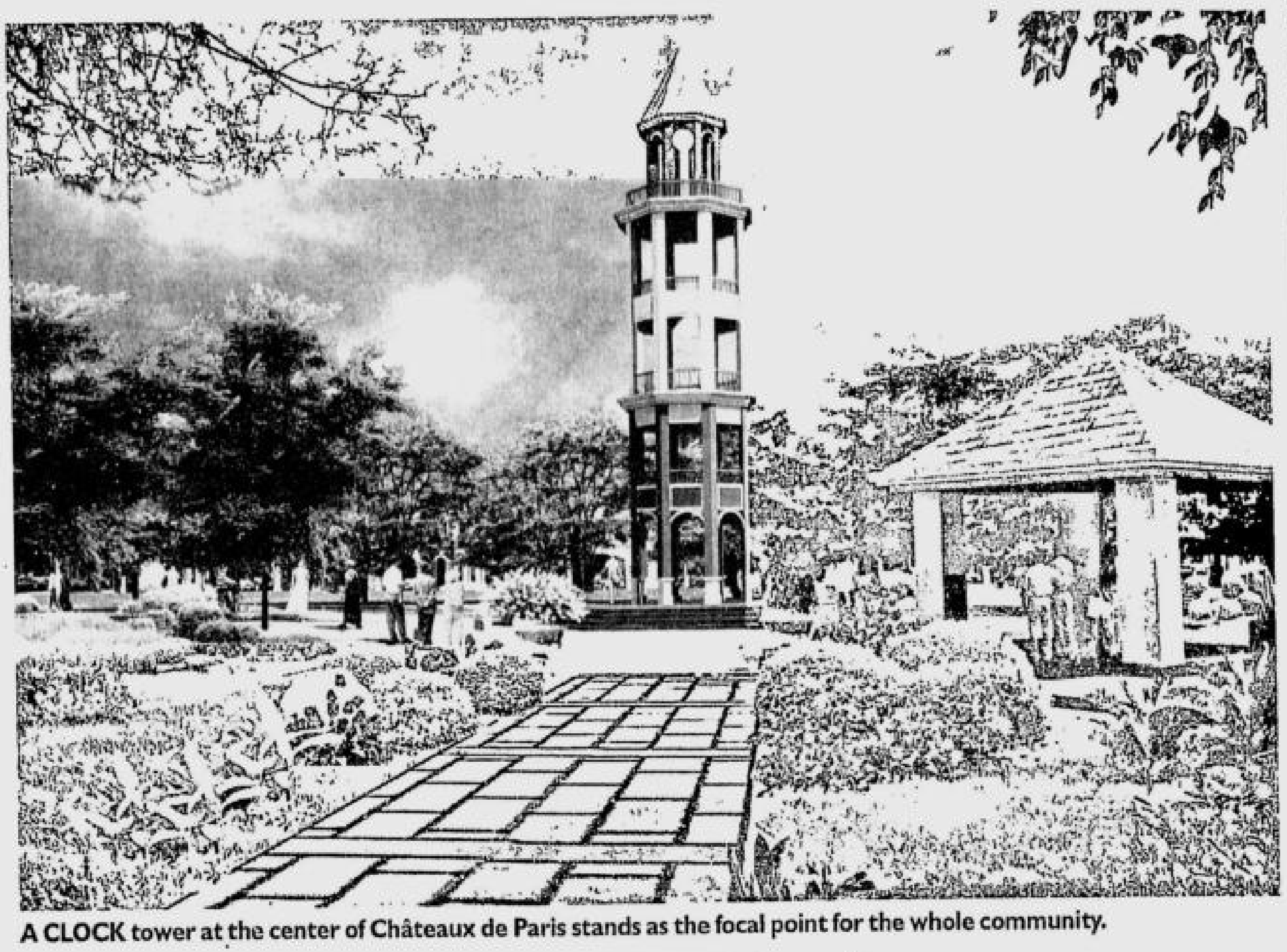
GRACIOUS HOME LIVING AND LUXURIOUS PHILIPPINE VACATIONING COME TOGETHER WHEN balikbayans and overseas Filipinos purchase Ayala Land properties from May 1 to Aug. 31

Ayala Land International Sales Inc. (Alisi) recently signed an exclusive promotions package with Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts and Spa and Traders Hotel.

Those qualified get as much as P40,000 to P120,000 worth of room nights under this arrangement with Traders Hotel Manila, Makati Shangri-La, Edsa Shangri-La Manila and Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort and Spa.

Alisi general manager David L. Rafael signed the promotions package with the hotels' sales and marketing directors. They are Lourdes Juco of Makati Shangri-La, Benedict Lim of Edsa Shangri-La, Peggy Angeles of Shangri-La Hotel and Resort and Sam Gacos of Trader's Hotel.

South Forbes to get another ₱1-B investment



A CLOCK tower at the center of Châteaux de Paris stands as the focal point for the whole community.

SOUTH FORBES GOLF CITY WILL GET ANother P1 billion in investment from its developer due to the high demand for its world-class themed communities.

"We are allocating P1 billion for the development of our fifth themed project within South Forbes, Châteaux de Paris. We believe its royal and regal residences, inspired by French architecture, are directly in line with our overall vision for South Forbes and will complement our existing projects that have been enthusiastically received by the market," according to Cathay Land president Jeffrey Ng.

Three model chateaus will wow homebuyers: the classical Chambord, the modern Fontainebleau and the contemporary Chantilly. All are named after famous royal chateaus in France. The clubhouse, located at the far center end of the property, will be the grandest structure in the high-end village. It seems to float in a moat, as inspired by French castles, and also features a grand ballroom.

A significant amount of the investment will go into land development for the 500 lots of this 25-hectare village. Lot sizes average from 300 to 400 square meters, whereas house and lot packages average P10 million.

One of the main features that will distinguish Châteaux de Paris is its landscaping. "The main inspiration for this, of course, is the intricate landscaping of the City of Lights," Ng shares. The landscaping for the entire project reinterprets 18th century French garden design traditions during the reign of King Louis XIV. Gardens during his time were often characterized by grandeur, built to impress and showcase a high degree of wealth and power.

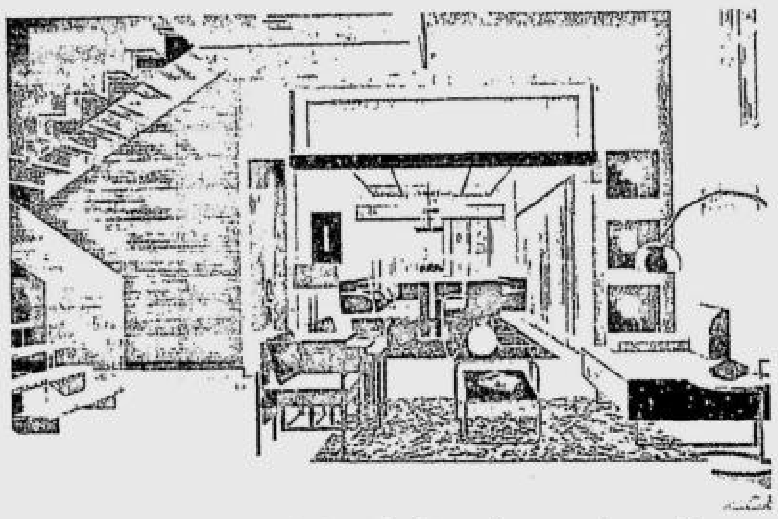
As such, French allée or alleys bordered by trees or clipped hedges adorn the entire project. Allees intersect in acute angles and if viewed from above resemble a goose-foot. The allees, along with the canals and reflecting pools, not only lend a strong visual effect but also make it easy for residents to go to the nearest pocket park or even the clubhouse for relaxation.

"We will invest in only the best trees, shrubs and colorful flowering plants to make sure Châteaux de Paris maintains a high visual effect on residents and their guests. We are going for the highest level of quality," Ng promises.

Aside from its new project, South Forbes offers four other top choices for homeowners: charming homes at South Forbes Mediterranean Villas, resort living at Bali Mansions, Zen sanctuaries at Tokyo Mansions, and Golf View Terraces, which gives residents magnificent views of the fairways. All projects offer a free golf membership, at no activation fee, to the world-class 18-hole South Forbes Golf Club.

All in all, Cathay Land is allocating P5.25 billion for their project located in Metro Sta. Rosa. "This further assures homebuyers and investors of our strong commitment to South Forbes," Ng comments.

More information about Châteaux de Paris and other South Forbes projects can be obtained by simply calling 635-7777 or 631-8855 or visiting www.southforbes.com.



STRAIGHT lines and solid colors dominate the monochromatic scheme of the Fontainebleau's modern French living room.

Life gets sweeter with Brittany

DEMAND continues to grow for this grand Italian-inspired home, giving rise to Courtyards II of Portofino.

THE SWEET LIFE DOES GET SWEETER AND Brittany Corp. is doling out far more than just the sugar. With the phenomenal success of the Courtyards of Portofino, the legacy of the romantic Italian high life continues through Brittany's Courtyards II of Portofino.

This extraordinary property is a worthy addition to the Portofino development—a master-planned community spanning 300 hectares south of Manila. Just five minutes from the central business district of Alabang, this remarkable project has set the standards for high-end property developments and has continued to raise the bar higher as it incorporates unique design features and amenities.

Says Brittany president Jing Serrano: "From the very beginning, we knew that Courtyards of Portofino was meant to be Brittany's masterpiece. It brought together key elements of the Italian architecture along with the European city's lifestyle that is very familiar to the Filipino sensibilities. Its tremendous success is an affirmation of our vision for what luxury urban living in Metro Manila should be.

"We are confident that Courtyards II of Portofino can replicate the success of Courtyards I. From the first development, we understood that people want a better quality of life. We all want secure homes with open spaces where our children can play and where houses are not cramped. And with the second Courtyards development, we hope that more people can enjoy this Italian enclave just a short distance from the central business district," adds Serrano.

Sense of pride

The splendid clusters of Italian-inspired homes do not fail to illicit a sense of pride among its residents. Every single detail takes into account the inspiration while linking it closely with the Filipino sensibility. For instance, the homes are placed in clusters rather than rows—creating a more inviting ambience to encourage social interaction among neighbors. The homes are positioned around a central courtyard—a repeating theme throughout the entire property for which it was named after.

But the more unique feature is the inner courtyard found within each of the homes. There is an open space—either at the center or at the side of the residence—that can be accessed from the surrounding hallways. This particular configuration encourages more family interaction by providing a specific area where members of the household are bound to run into each other. The open layout also allows more sunshine and fresh air to circulate within the structure.

Casitas for guests

For the master of the household, casitas were integrated in the design with their needs especially in mind. Each home has a room that is slightly set apart from the main house. While ideal for staying guests, it is primarily meant to be a quiet space that would allow the homeowner to indulge in his personal business.

A finishing touch to these residences is the porticos. These arches that rest elegantly above the columns accent the courtyard design along with the cobblestones, sun-drenched colors, and cupolas that serve to complete the charming Italian motif.

Located within the Portofino development on the Las Piñas-Cavite-Laguna-Muntinlupa Link Road, Courtyards II is a charming cluster of homes situated beside Portofino Heights and closer to Alabang's commercial district. It is also very close to Monte Di Portofino—the Portofino Heights Clubhouse and amenities area.

With Courtyards I completely sold out, Courtyards II offers a rare opportunity to be a part of this charming community. Only 77 Courtyard homes are being offered to ensure the exclusivity of the property. Lot cuts range from 289 to 593 square meters. Price packages range from P12.8 million to P15.8 million.

Premium utilities

The Courtyards II also offers premium utilities for its residents. To ensure an unobstructed view of the landscape, cables for power and communication were buried underground. Perimeter fences and buffer trees line the boundary lots to ensure security aside from the 24-hour security system that safeguards the entire community.

Deep wells and water reservoirs ensure a round-the-clock water service. Garbage is collected every other day. Most of all, a professional property management team secures the community and makes sure that the high standards are maintained long after the last lot has been purchased.

A FEATURE that is unique to the Courtyard homes, the Rembrandt courtyard brings a piece of the outdoors inside the house.

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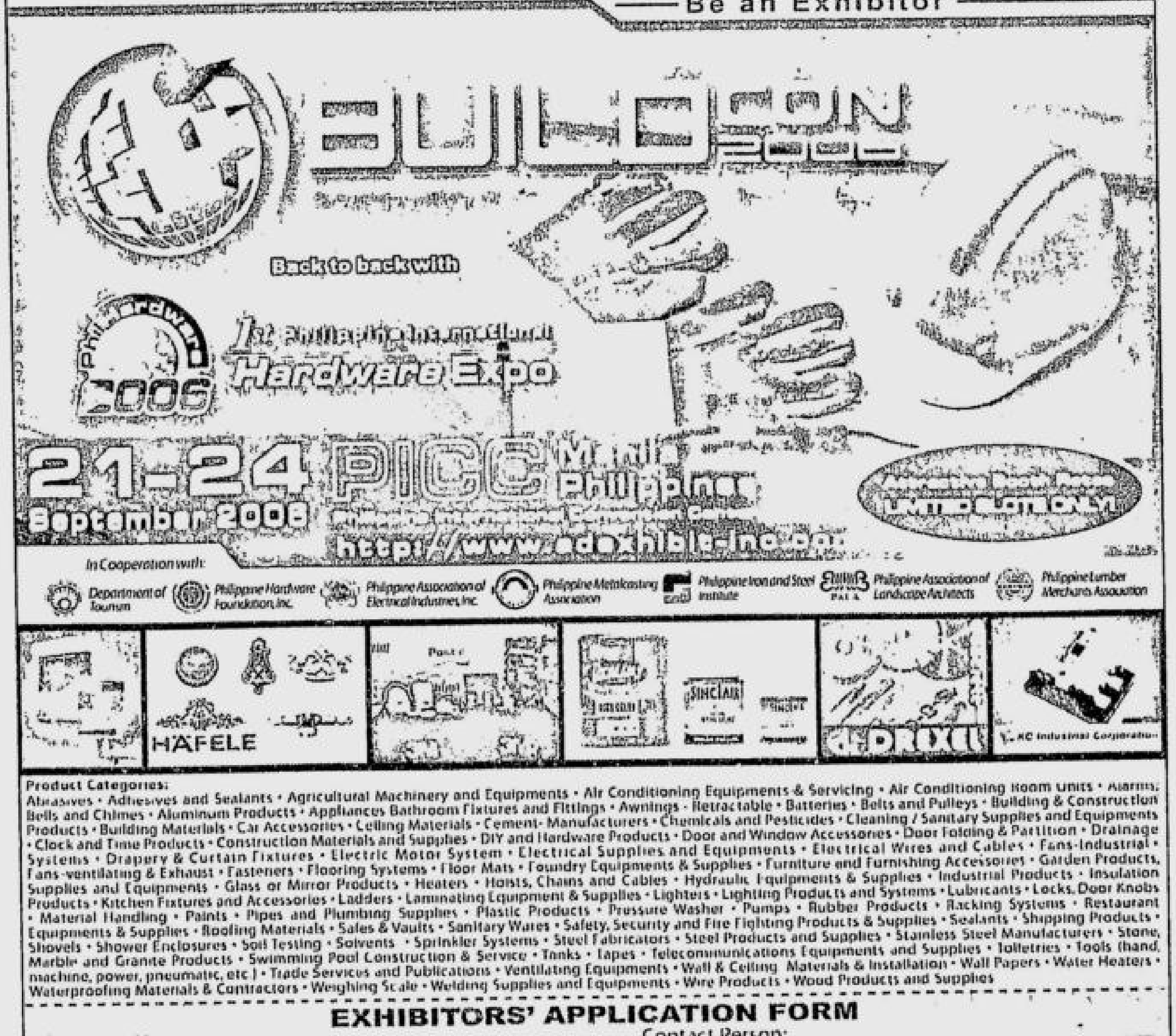
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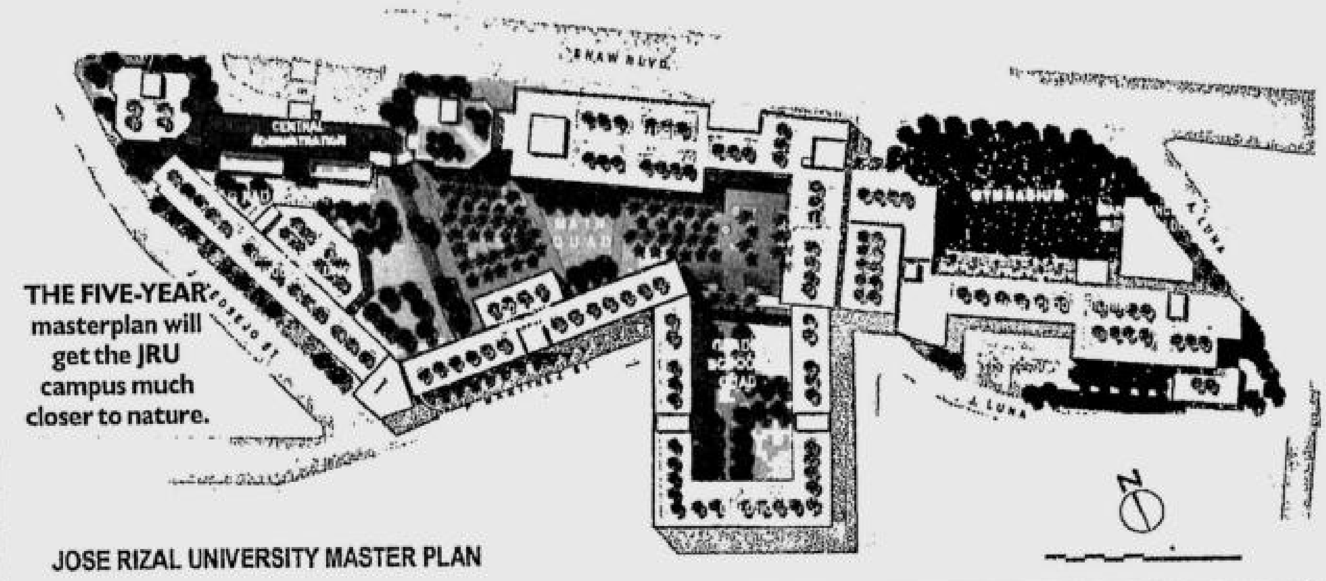
Campus to use special landscaping, architecture in makeover

By Charles E. Buban

SOME THINGS ARE SLOWLY TAKING shape at the Jose Rizal University in Mandaluyong City. A new gym or sports complex as well as a new grade school building and its quadrangle are now being constructed.

By next year, another building is scheduled for construction and in 2009 the university would be inaugurating a new main library building together with the entrance hall on Shaw boulevard.



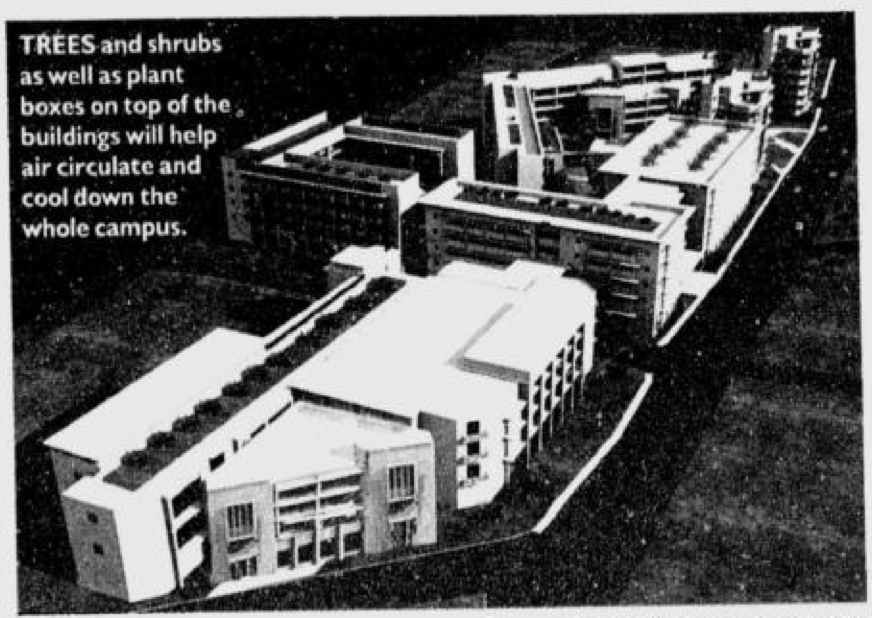
THE FIVE-YEAR masterplan will get the JRU campus much closer to nature.

JOSE RIZAL UNIVERSITY MASTER PLAN

According to JRU president Vicente Fabella, plans from now until 2011 have been established and, if everything goes according to plan, construction of the key facilities and remodeling of the campus grounds will transform JRU into a place that enhances the learning and teaching environment by making sure that there is a good balance of greenery and space occupied by physical structures.

"When in the past, there has been unregulated growth and development within the campus, it was decided this time to draw up a masterplan that would guide the university how it should look like five to even 10 years from now," he said.

Helping JRU with its initial five-year makeover is Archion Architects.



TREES and shrubs as well as plant boxes on top of the buildings will help air circulate and cool down the whole campus.

Much closer to nature

The main focus of this masterplan is to get the campus much closer to nature.

"The campus has always been beautiful—with century-old trees dating back to (Andres) Bonifacio's time. But our goal here is to create more spectacular green spaces that will make the university stand out as an oasis in an urban environment," said Fabella in reference to JRU's location in a heavily populated and congested area of Shaw boulevard.

He added that carefully placed canopy trees, ground cover and bushes will be used to screen out heat, glare, dust and traffic noise.

Garden decks will also be constructed on top of the buildings to minimize heat buildup.

Unique design

Aside from the trees, landscaped gardens and plant boxes, Fabella said Archion Architects also designed and positioned all the future buildings in such a way they will allow not only hot air to dissipate but also cooler air to move freely through the structures.

FABELLA hopes to create a campus environment that is more conducive to learning and teaching.

"Moreover, these new buildings will take advantage of the country's two prevailing winds: *Hanging Amihan* (northeast monsoon) and *Hanging Habagat* (southwest monsoon). By employing designs like elevating these buildings on stilts, such a design would allow the prevailing wind to flow freely into the building, thus cooling its occupants," he explained.

Adequate spaces will also be placed in between buildings so this will force air into the interior of the campus.

"It should be noted that this physical transformation is not to accommodate more students," he explained adding that JRU has maintained its 16,000 population for years already. "Rather, the masterplan will assist us in realizing the our goal of accelerating our ascent among the country's premier universities while transforming JRU into one of the most attractive campus environments in the Philippines."

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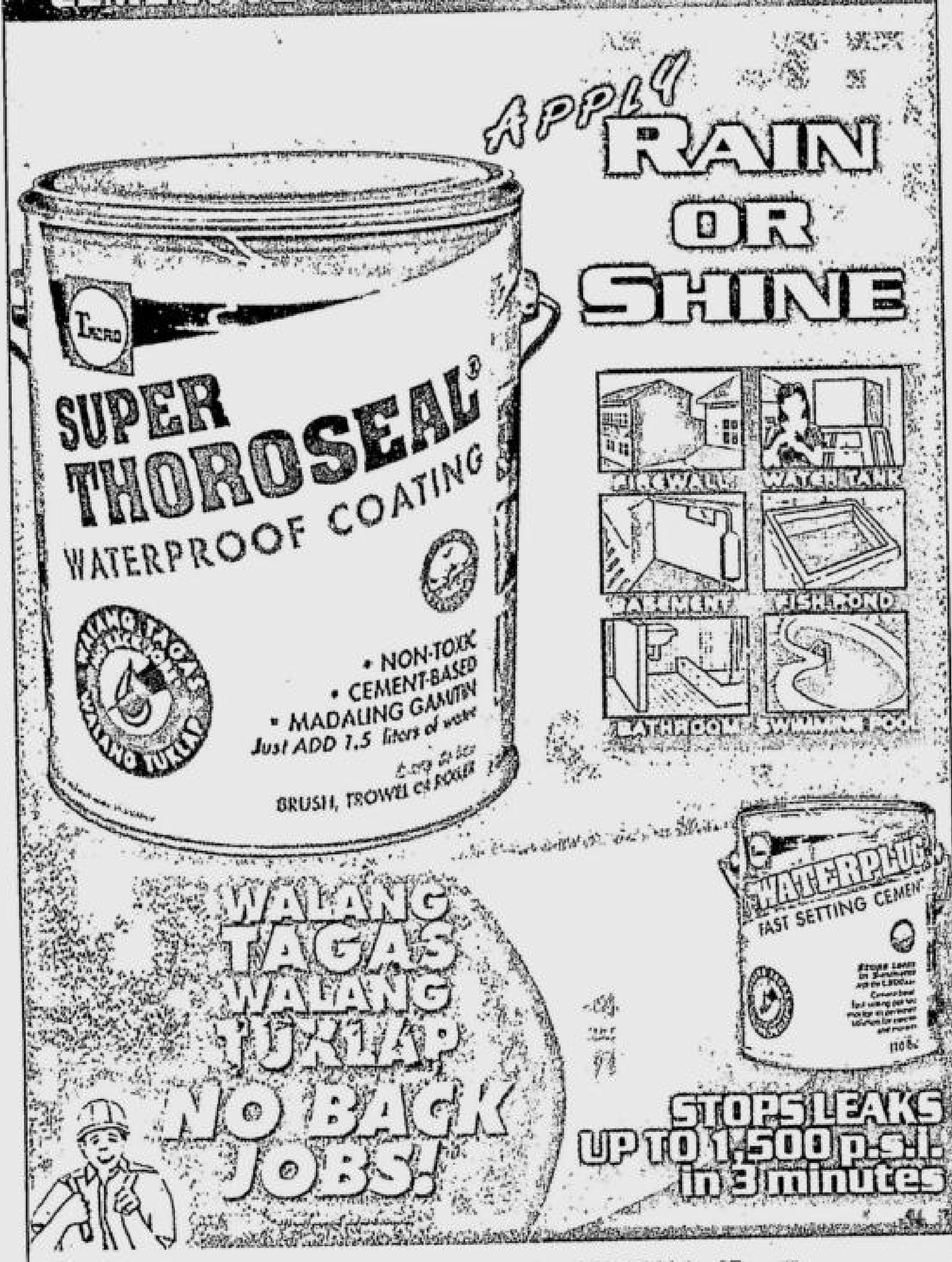

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A Mediterranean feast at One Serendra

ONE SERENDRA, THE EXCLUSIVE AYALA Land Premier (ALP) garden residential condominium, recently held an open house at the Serendra Sales Pavilion in Bonifacio Global City. The whole-day affair brought together potential buyers and valued clients of One Serendra in a Morrocan-inspired venue, where guests were treated to Mediterranean cuisine courtesy of Café Mediterranean and a flea market with a Moroccan theme.

Featuring items from model units of One Serendra and The Residences at Greenbelt—the ALP high-rise condominium at the heart of Makati City and Greenbelt lifestyle center—the flea market boasted of high-quality design furniture and artwork selected by interior designers Anna Sy, Chito Vijandre, Leo Almeria, Budji Layug and Marion Coscolluela.

Items included antique Asian pieces, narra furniture, Murano lamps, indigenous pottery, oil paintings and prints, and various home accessories. The pavilion's wide garden and gazebo was covered in a large tent embellished with lamps and swags to simulate the exciting cultural market atmosphere of Morocco.

Pavilion landscaping

The natural lush landscaping of the pavilion—representative of the actual greenery residents will enjoy at One Serendra—completed the overall Mediterranean feel. By midday, almost all the pieces were sold to many of ALP's eager clients.

The Moroccan concept also gave guests a taste of the soon-to-be-completed The Piazza at Serendra, where Mediterranean cuisine and shopping will be one of the multicultural experiences at the global promenade.

"One Serendra has the best of two worlds—people get all the space and privacy they want in their homes, in the gardens, amid the lush greenery, away from the hustle and bustle of city. At the same time, they can choose to step into The Piazza and immerse themselves in a truly multicultural experience," said Kate Ilagan, head of the Residential Buildings group of ALP.

Simultaneous with the flea market activity, brokers entertained valued prospects interested in availing of their own space within the sprawling garden condominium complex of One Serendra, one of the country's most anticipated and pioneering residential developments to date. Guests appreciated the large-scale diorama of the development and interactive PC-based floor plans, and toured the tastefully designed, full-size model units which gave them a foretaste of One Serendra's luxurious promise of space.

ONE Serendra guests enjoyed a feast of Mediterranean cuisine befitting the flea market theme of the open house.

Garden condo community

One Serendra is Ayala Land Premier's development in Serendra, an expansive garden condominium community spanning about 12 hectares located at Bonifacio Global City, the rising premier business district in the Philippines.

One Serendra offers a luxury of space with its bigger unit sizes and low-density development, together with themed gardens and country club-like amenities such as an exclusive spa. It is also a full pedestrian community, with 100 percent car-free areas where children can roam freely. Offering luxurious suburban living at the heart of the metropolis, One Serendra is ideal for people who want the benefits of urban expediency without losing the graces of a vast and airy suburbia.

Model units are available for viewing at the Serendra Sales Pavilion on 26th Street in Bonifacio Global City, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily.

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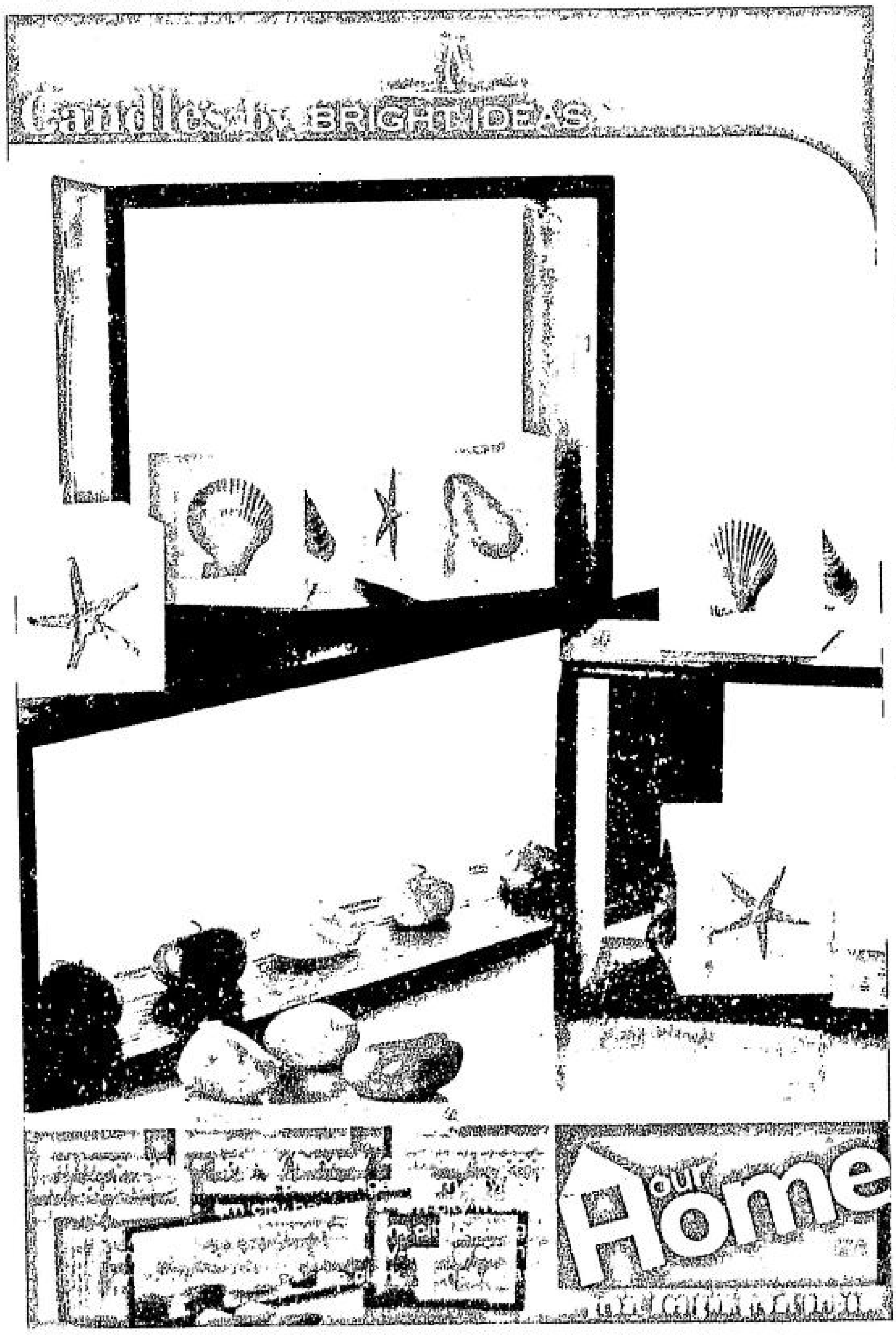
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I WASN'T FEELING well last night. It took me a while to fall asleep, but when I did, I fell into a deep trance.

I saw a flash of white, and then clouds, and then I looked down and saw pavement. I turned and saw a beautiful city. Then a bus passed in front of me, blocking the huge billboard of Singapore.

I had the feeling I was in Manila. Everything looked so different, though, so I thought, "Maybe I'm in Davao." A few seconds later it came to me: "Oh, I'm in the future!"

An angel came into view and spoke, "Observe these times. Remember what you see. And when you return tell all you can about it. Show them there is hope for the Philippines!" I cried. Because that line is too cheesy.

The following is an account of what I saw in the future. I urge you to continue reading. Take this good news to heart.

In the year 2000

In the near future, Kris Aquino will have her own channel. Its line-up will consist of game shows, talk shows, soaps, sitcoms, and public service programs, all starring her. Even all the advertisements will have her as an endorser. She'll be on your screens 24/7, so she'll move into the Big Brother house permanently. All sound and video data recorded in the house will be used to create a robotic Kris that will serve as a stand-in for her if she, a) loses her voice, b) passes away.

In the future, the local music industry will die because Koreans will have taken over.

Filipino filmmakers will be recognized around the world—except in the Philippines, where director Joel Lamangan, after making 20 films a year for 20 years, holds a monopoly over the film industry. By this time, he will make 30 films in six months from his wheelchair, which will be pushed by Mother Lily who is now called "Are Lily."

In the near future, domestic travel will get so expensive, that masses will flock to a Sentosa-like artificial beach in Manila owned by Henry Sy. This beach, called SM Beach of Asia, will be at the site of the former Mall of Asia.

In the future, people will be so apathetic when it comes to politics, that politics will be reduced to a weekly show on ANC, hosted by Pia Hontiveros. (Of course, the rest of the time on ANC you'll be able to catch reruns of Kris' shows!) GMA will be the prime minister, but you don't care. That is until you, the reader, say "GMA, *patayin!*" (meaning, "turn off the TV station") and she has you killed for that "wild militant outburst."

Members of the press will all be clones of Ignacio Bunye. Newspapers will be filled with "good news" about the strengthening of the peso by 0.009% and the influx of foreign investors, who own your house and children.

In the near future, the Philippines will be the place to go to shop in Asia, but only because we will be dumped with surplus goods. (One man's trash is another's treasure!)

This country will be known all over the world, not only as a source of precious laborers, but also for us expertise in technology support. There will be twice as many Starbucks outlets to accommodate twice as many fresh grads, who are skilled in technology support and are eager to take your calls.

Finally, in the future, nightlife in the country will be kicking like crazy. This is going to be party land! It's gonna be wild—there will be parties everywhere, and people from all over the world will flock to our beaches and cities to mingle with us good-looking creatures.

Nightlife, in the future, will be from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., to accommodate the thousands of young people who take calls from 8 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Revelation 1:1

I woke up and cried. Beads of sweat covered my body. I shouted, "I'm not worthy of this good news! Why couldn't you have told someone else—like, um, Richard Gutierrez?"

But I have been chosen; so I must carry out my mission.

I tell you, the reason you read this is that you, like many others, are obsessed with the future.

Fear future

People have always been fascinated with what's in store for them, but in our times this has turned into an obsession.

The thing is, our obsession with the future is not an expression of hope. No, hope enables us to concentrate on the present. People are obsessed with the future because of fear. We idealize future because we're scared we can't handle it, or because we're scared to face the present.

There's SARS, terrorists, murderous taxi drivers, snatchers, communists, cops, rapists, and leptospirosis. I don't blame anyone for being terrified.

The problem is that we become so scared, we get too occupied with looking into the future, and we lose sight of what's directly in front of us.

That's when we give in to other people's lovely rhetoric—to empty promises, and enchanted first-world dreams. We get so scared that we entrust our future to other people, and decide to take a back seat.

We don't see we're in a real-life "V for Vendetta." Chancellor Sutler from that film tells us what most of our leaders are doing: He says, "I want this country to realize that we stand on the edge of oblivion. I want everyone to remember why they need us!"

While we imagine the future, "greener pasteurs," and, "better times," we're being played like fiddles. Except, it is our fears that is used to play us.

We're told we have the best leaders, and there are no alternatives. That's playing to our fears. We're told how insurgents want to take over the country and ruin it. That's playing to our fears. We're told we need discipline, and they instill this "discipline" by making us scared.

This article is supposed to be about the future. I hope many of you realize the first half of it wasn't, and the second half of it was.

Your future doesn't involve Kris Aquino, or the SM Beach of Asia.

Your future involves *you*. You won't have a future if you just keep looking forward in time and imagining it. You will have a future if you're willing to face your fears.

To be more concrete, the next few months are supposed to be filled with choices for this country. We're supposed to be approaching this forked road. We at Super! hope you won't just ride along.

Let's look deeper the promises we're given. Let's demand accountability when it's needed. "Moving on" shouldn't mean taking the back seat, it should mean being at the forefront of things.

Stop imagining the future, and be part of it. Let's remember that we have no right imagining a future if we don't plan on participating in making it happen.

Back to the future

L'OREAL'S Dave [illegible] Villaraza [illegible] Santander Vot[illegible]

THE L'OREAL COLOUR TROPHY Awards held recently at the ballroom of the Crowne Plaza Hotel showcased thrilling sights, sounds and colors when the 22 finalists revealed their creative talents and fashion trend predictions in the hairdressing industry. The venue's Retro Future theme was in full swing, with vintage cars out front and a photo exhibit of the finalists' work. The finalists were judged for the most outstanding achievements in hair color combinations. They were selected from 300 entries nationwide. Richard Bilalo of Piandre Salon grabbed the first prize of P250,000 as he impressed the judges with his creativity and uniqueness. Check out the Philippines' most creative colorists, who have the vision and skill to produce a modern look suited to today's Filipina.

H UNIVERSE: Hair guru Henri Calayag of H Salon

BARBIE world of Baroi Chan

WELL-COIFFED: Madam Imelda Marcos

FILIPINO FLAVOR: Chef Rolly Laudico with wife Jackie

FUTURE PERFECT: Tim Yap in Puey Quiñones with Kat Holigores of FTY

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3. M&M's® packs with the Fun and Fortune stickers must be kept and shall be presented for verification purposes in order to claim the prize.
4. Promo will run from June 15-August 31, 2006.
5. Prizes include: 1 unit Volvo S40, 10 units Sony Ericsson W810i Walkman Phones & 30 units Apple Video I-Pods.
6. Draws will be held on July 3, July 17, July 31, August 14, August 28, 2006. Grand draw will be on Sept. 8, 2006.
7. All entries are cumulative. Non-winning entries will qualify for the succeeding draws. The more entries sent, the more chances of winning.
8. Cut-off dates for entries Sunday, 11:59pm prior to the draw date. For the Grand Draw, cut-off date will be on July31, 2006 at 11:59pm.
9. Draws will be held at the Information Gateway office in the presence of a representative from BFAD, Information Gateway and Master Foods Philippines, Inc.
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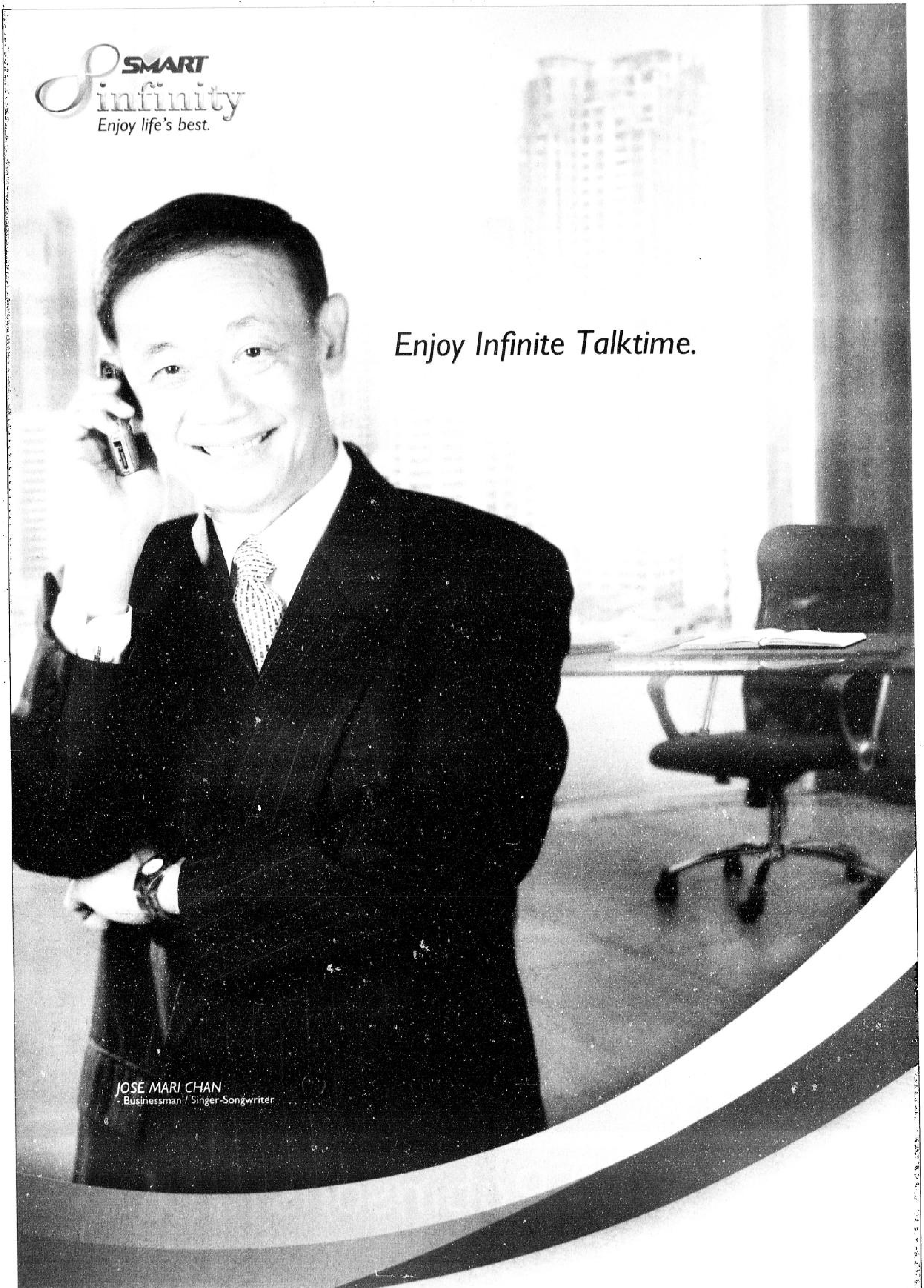

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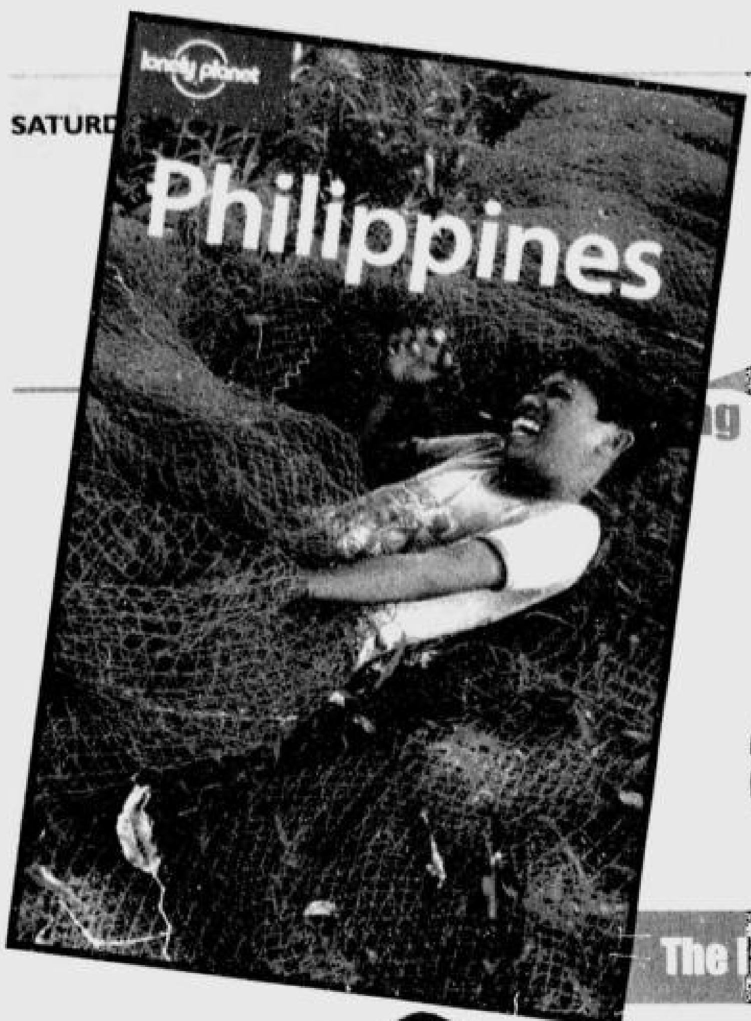

Leaving footprints around 7,107 islands

The latest Lonely Planet Philippines hits the book shelves all over the world

OUT THE WINDOW

Tals Diaz

"Filipinos speak some 70 dialects, yet in none of them are the words for depression, anxiety, anguish or even boredom."—"The Happiest People on Earth," Chris Rowthorn.

"The Philippines is reported to have the highest concentration of coral species of any country on earth; of the estimated 500 species of coral in the world, 488 are thought to be present in the Philippines."

"The Philippines is a good place for culinary daredevils. An item on the menu of many eateries specializing in Filipino food, bopis is made of pig's lungs, chopped and stir-fried. Quite tasty, really, once you get over your initial feeling of revulsion."
— Excerpts from Lonely Planet Philippines, 9th edition

I GET A TUG OF JEALOUSY, NO, more like I get swallowed whole by envy, each time I watch the scenes on CNN showing the world party going on in Germany during this World Cup season. Trawling the streets are the feverish fans, with smiles as wide as half moons, bedecked in their country's colors to manifest their fiery patriotism. Everyday, I watch this global party where every human being on Earth is invited to.

There's a contagious spirit of camaraderie among nations, even among fans whose countries aren't competing in the Cup. There were Israeli fans posing with Argentines, a fan from India waving the Deutschland flag, Spanish brothers passing around La Rioja wine to the lucky people who happened to pass by. Two Aussies living in England shared that they had driven for days to Germany to support their beloved Socceroos. Ghanians, whose team made it to the World Cup for the first time, were warmly welcomed by Germans who even professed to being Ghana fans. This is the other extremely enjoyable sideshow of the Copa Mundial; it isfor me the best reality show on earth.

That's when it hit me. This truly is the "The Lonely Planet generation," as many pundits have coined. With information channels getting more and more streamlined each day, Googlites are fraternizing all over the world in real time, thus giving birth to an age of cultural tourism. Each nation on earth bears something fascinating and unique for the rest of the world to behold. We really are living in interesting times! And just watching the kaleidoscope of fans on the flickering screen left me yet again with an incurable case of wanderlust and travel envy.

Not quite strangers in a strange land

So what's the fastest cure for travel envy when I lack enough *kaching* in the bank account? Head over to the Lonely Planet shelf of a bookstore. It's akin to walking through the looking glass for every Alice in Wanderlust.

I admit I'm quite the sentimental fan of these seminal guidebooks that were the first opened windows to my global adventures. In Siem Reap, my friend and I saved heaps on transportation expenses and tour guides thanks to our dog-eared copy of Lonely Planet Cambodia. I mapped out my crazy 3-month Mexican adventure with my well-loved, bible-thick Lonely Planet Mexico, which was eventually stolen from me somewhere between the Mayan Ruins in Palenque and the state of Chiapas. I found a cheap place to stay near the famous waterfalls of Foz do Iguaçu in Brazil, and very recently, I enjoyed every minute of Buenos Aires thanks to Lonely Planet's city guide to the romantic Argentine capital.

Thus, my beloved Lonely Planet books unintentionally became my coffee and wine-stained scrapbooks. Marked on the pages are travel testimonials---scribbles of in-transit thoughts, email addresses of newfound, fellow nomadic friends, and stars highlighting some of the better places mentioned. Crammed within the pages are bus tickets, half-finished postcards, museum passes and even tree leaves, yep, *tree leaves*, which in some parts of Uruguay are believed to be a

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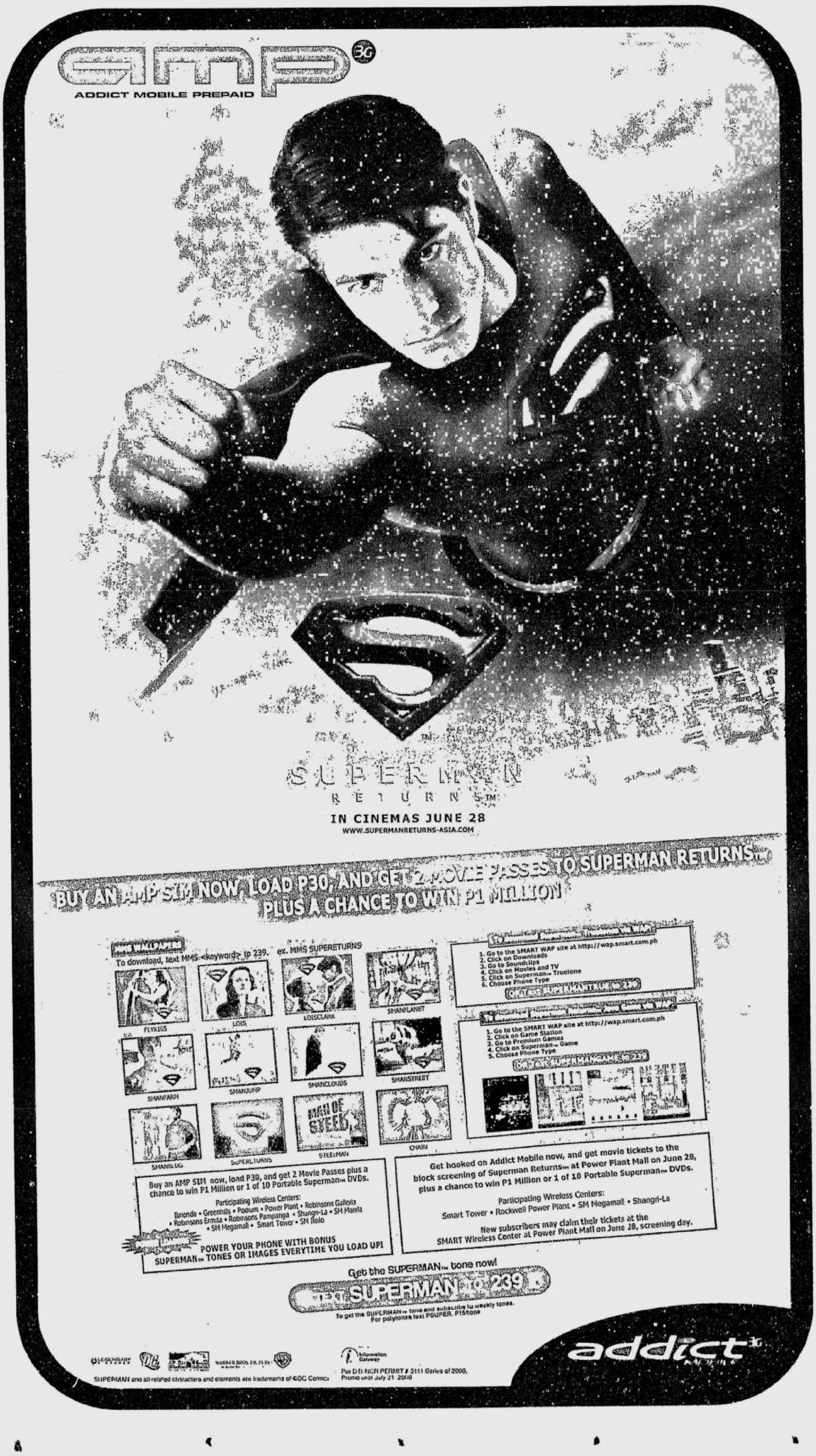
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The Philippines as the adventure sports and ecotourism hotbed of Southeast Asia

By Greg Bloom

THE LATEST LONELY PLANet guide to the Philippines, released in June, heaps no shortage of praise on the country's natural beauty. A few snippets:

"A fantastic landscape with wonders enough to stagger even the most jaded traveler."

A land of "stunning beach havens," "gloriously crooked earth," "undiscovered breaks, beaches and rapids," and "world-class jungle trekking." Palawan is "one of the most rewarding outdoor-sports destinations in all of Southeast Asia."

As the author of the North and Southeast Luzon sections of the book, I was lucky enough to travel through some of the country's most beautiful landscapes, including the Cordillera mountains and the volcanoes and national parks of the Bicol region. I live in Manila and have traveled on my own to other regions of the country that are, as the book suggests, just as beautiful. Why, then, does tourism in the Philippines remain leagues behind most of its Southeast Asian neighbors—in terms of both reputation and sheer tourism numbers?

The secret is in marketing Lonely Planet Philippines' co-author Greg Bloom says

Part of the reason is geographic, since the country is removed from the main Southeast Asian tourism drag, centered around Thailand. But the travelers of the world are a pretty mobile group these days, unafraid to hop on a plane and go just about everywhere. I'm convinced that more of them would come to the Philippines if the country's tourism officials started marketing the country differently.

As our book makes clear, the country has all the makings of an adventure tourism Mecca. With its natural wonders facing a litany of environmental threats, the Philippines is also ripe for an ecotourism revolution. A few regions of the country—notably Palawan—are doing their best to promote ecotourism and adventure tourism, while a few enterprising individuals offer small-scale adventure tour packages.

However, they are not getting enough help from the Department of Tourism, which continues to obsess with a handful of marquee tourist attractions—the Chocolate Hills and tarsiers of Bohol, Boracay, the rice terraces of Banaue and Tubbataha Reef come to mind—at the expense of marketing the country's adventure tourism prospects.

The two countries with the strongest reputations for adventure tourism and ecotourism are undoubtedly Costa Rica and New Zealand. The main links on the Web sites of the tourism authorities of Costa Rica, New Zealand and the Philippines are as follows:

Costa Rica: "Beaches," "Culture," "Adventure," "Ecotourism"

New Zealand: "Scenic Highlights," "Activities," "Events Calendar"

Philippines: "Beach," "Dive," "Wildlife," "Heritage," "Golf"

It's pretty clear where Costa Rica's priorities lie. New Zealand takes a somewhat different strategy, but if one clicks the "Activities" link one is directed to massive amounts of information on adventure tourism in New Zealand. The Philippines, on the other hand, completely fails to mention anything about adventure tourism or ecotourism on its home page. To be fair, the Wow Philippines site does have a page on its site dedicated to adventure sports, but it's almost impossible to find, buried in an obscure drop-down menu under the misleading tag "other."

However you slice it, the Philippines is not doing enough to market adventure tourism. That's a shame because this is exactly where the country has a comparative advantage over its Southeast Asian neighbors. Few countries in Southeast Asia can compete with the Philippines in terms of accessible spelunking, jungle-trekking, rappelling, kayaking and mountain-biking opportunities. Unfortunately, the country is doing little to exploit this comparative advantage, concentrating instead on the marquee attractions mentioned above as well as a handful of sporty activities like diving and golf.

How smart is that? Well, the Chocolate Hills look cool on posters, but they can be a letdown in person and neither the hills nor the bug-eyed tarsiers that populate them are reason enough alone to visit the Philippines. Tubbataha Reef, for all its bounty, is virtually inaccessible unless you are a well-heeled diver. Boracay is great but Thailand has a hundred Boracays. I was lucky enough to cover the rice terraces and they are truly sublime, but they are certainly not limited to Banaue. Why not also promote the more remote terraces, such as those in Kalinga? Adventure trekking tours to these more remote terraces could be a huge draw.

What about diving and golf? The Philippines has good diving, but again it probably doesn't compete with places like Micronesia and Papua New Guinea. So there's no comparative advantage there. The country does indeed have some world class golf courses, but virtually all of them are private and off limits to tourists! The country's heavy promotion of golf is thus inexplicable.

What tourism officials should be doing instead is turning their attention to the No. 1 thing the country has going for it: ecotourism and adventure travel. Reading our book would be a great start, as we write about many of the enterprising individuals struggling on their own to get a foothold in this potentially lucrative market.

In Cagayan there's the Sierra Madre Outdoor Club offering rafting trips and jungle trekking in the Sierra Madre Natural Park. In Bicol, the Kadlagan Outdoor Shop has trips to the Caramoan Peninsula, which rivals Palawan in its limestone-etched beauty. On Camiguin Island, a dramatic volcanic landscape in Mindanao, we have Camiguin Action Geckos offering rappelling, jungle trekking and adventure hikes. Trexplore in rugged Samar is a one-man operation tailoring caving, rafting and bike trips.

Those are just a few of the many small adventure tour companies operating throughout the country. The DOT should look to these individuals for both inspiration and guidance as it redirects its energy toward turning the Philippines into an adventure tourism and ecotourism Mecca.

The country must also improve its national parks. As our book points out, the Philippines is great at declaring national parks but terrible at managing them. There are almost 70 national parks in the country, yet only seven meet international national park-designation criteria, mainly because they are not properly protected. The parks also tend to be woefully short of tourist-friendly infrastructure like visitor centers and well maintained walking trails.

The Philippines has all the potential in the world to become the adventure sports and ecotourism hotbed of Southeast Asia. The time is now for tourism officials to make the figurative leap in that direction.

Greg Bloom is a freelance writer and the co-author of the recently released Lonely Planet Philippines guide. He can be reached at gbloom@zpdee.net

Destination Philippines

Leaving footprints around 7,107 i

From page D1

lucky token for the wallet.

Pinoy Planeteer

That's why I got all keyed up when I found out that very recently, the famous traveler's bible came out with their latest version of our very own beloved archipelago. Yep, Lonely Planet Philippines is on its 9th edition, and I'm reading it cover to cover. I personally thought it was high time they updated the old version, and this sleek new edition has simply outdone itself, with superb photos, well-researched traveler's tips and even offbeat cultural phenomenon uniquely Pinoy, fromcockfighting, karaoke, and our taste for *balut*. I was really happy to see Pinikpikan and Rivermaya mentioned here, along with F. Sionil Jose's "Ermita." I was thrilled to read about my new favorite surf spot in Eastern Samar. The Manila nightlife is beefed up as well, so you'll happen upon descriptions of favorite hangouts SaGuijo, Bed, Conspiracy and Embassy. Too cool!

I was fortunate enough to meet one of the authors, Greg Bloom, during the official launch at Fully Booked (my favorite megalopolis of books and rabbit hole to the world out there). Greg struck me as a classic archetype of Pico Iyer's "Nowhereian," a dyed in the wool affiliate of the Lonely Planet Generation. This fearless travel writer was born in the United States, lived extensively in Ukraine, and now resides in Manila. Greg, who "had grown to love this land of a million smiles and quirky culture," was in charge of researching, traveling, and writing about North and Southeast Luzon. (There's my travel envy hitting me again ... *grrr*.)

During the Lonely Planet Philippines launch, Greg talked about his unique experiences while on the road. He said that even Filipinos would benefit from picking up a copy of Lonely Planet Philippines. Because of our diverse natural landscape, there is just so much potential to market our country as an eco-adventure destination, similar to Costa Rica and New Zealand. Yet because of the lack of information on what's out there in our 7,107 islands, we don't draw as many tourists as we should, compared to our Southeast Asian neighbors like Thailand and Malaysia.

Now that's the great thing about seeing our country from another perspective, through the eyes of the intrepid foreign traveler. You get to appreciate what we oft take for granted when we're busy bitching about politics and the chaos of Manila. Call
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NOURISH YOUR HEART TO HEALTH

Dr. Ludgerio Torres, Cardio Surgeon, Medical Director of the Philippine Heart Center

Cardiovascular disease is now the no.1 killer disease. This is due to the intake of fast food and junk food and a sedentary lifestyle. Salty and high cholesterol food as well as over eating should be avoided.

Nutrition is very important in surgery. Surgical patients have to be nutritionally prepared because they undergo serveral days without food intake. Keeping them adequately nourished prior to surgery helps prevent complications, and improve wound healing.

Nutritional drinks are important because the patients don't just need carbohydrates, fats and protein; but they also need vitamins, minerals and trace elements.

Dr. Luisito Llido, Surgeon; Head, Clinical Nutrition Center, St. Luke's Medical Center

Awareness of the value of nutrition is very low. It's the last item considered in the management of patients, which should not be the case. Treating a patient without nutrition is like running a car without a gasoline. The gasoline is nutrition. Without it, healing is slow and the patient is more prone to infections. You also expect increased morbidities, mortality, poorer quality of life, and more expenses for our patients. Nutrition enhances recovery, hastens healing and lessens complications by optimizing the body's metabolism. Studies show a mortality rate reduction of 50% among critically ill patients through nutrition support.

Dr. Divina Esteban, Medical Oncologist, President of the Philippine Society of Oncology, Inc.

Lifestyle factors which include an unhealthy diet and exposure to carcinogens like smoking, radiation and viruses have made cancer more prevalent than it was years ago.

Nutrition and cancer go together. A patient who is inadequately nourished responds poorly to cancer treatments. Studies also show that if you feed the cancer patient, you also feed the cancer cells. Cancer patients must take food that has less sugar and more lipids so that you don't feed the cancer cells. Patients must have a balanced diet which is rich in fruits, vegetables and fiber. They must also eat less red meat and more fish. Nutritional supplements also improve a patient's well-being as well as his health.

Dr. Romulo De Villa, Nutrition Oncologist; Founding President, Molecular Oncology Society of the Philippines; Board of Director, Philippine Society of Oncology, Inc.

Cancer always involves nutrition. The entry point of chemicals which damage the body and cause cancer, is through the mouth.

Studies involving cancer and nutrition have shown that a combination of Spinach (the Nutrient Lipoic acid found in spinach) and vitamin C kill cancer cells. Recent studies on Fiber shows that it can control the entry of sugars into the blood. Sugar feeds cancer cells. Therefore, if you want to control the fending of cancer cells, you must have enough fiber in your diet. A study on another kind of Fiber - FOS or Fructooligosacharides shows that it nourishes good bacteria in our intestines. Good bacteria strengthens our immune system.

Aside from proper nutrition, adult nutridonal drinks are crucial to the recovery of patients. They must be added to the regular diet because regular diet alone is not sufficient for a complete and balanced nutrition.

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endocrinologists, surgeons, oncologists and dieticia
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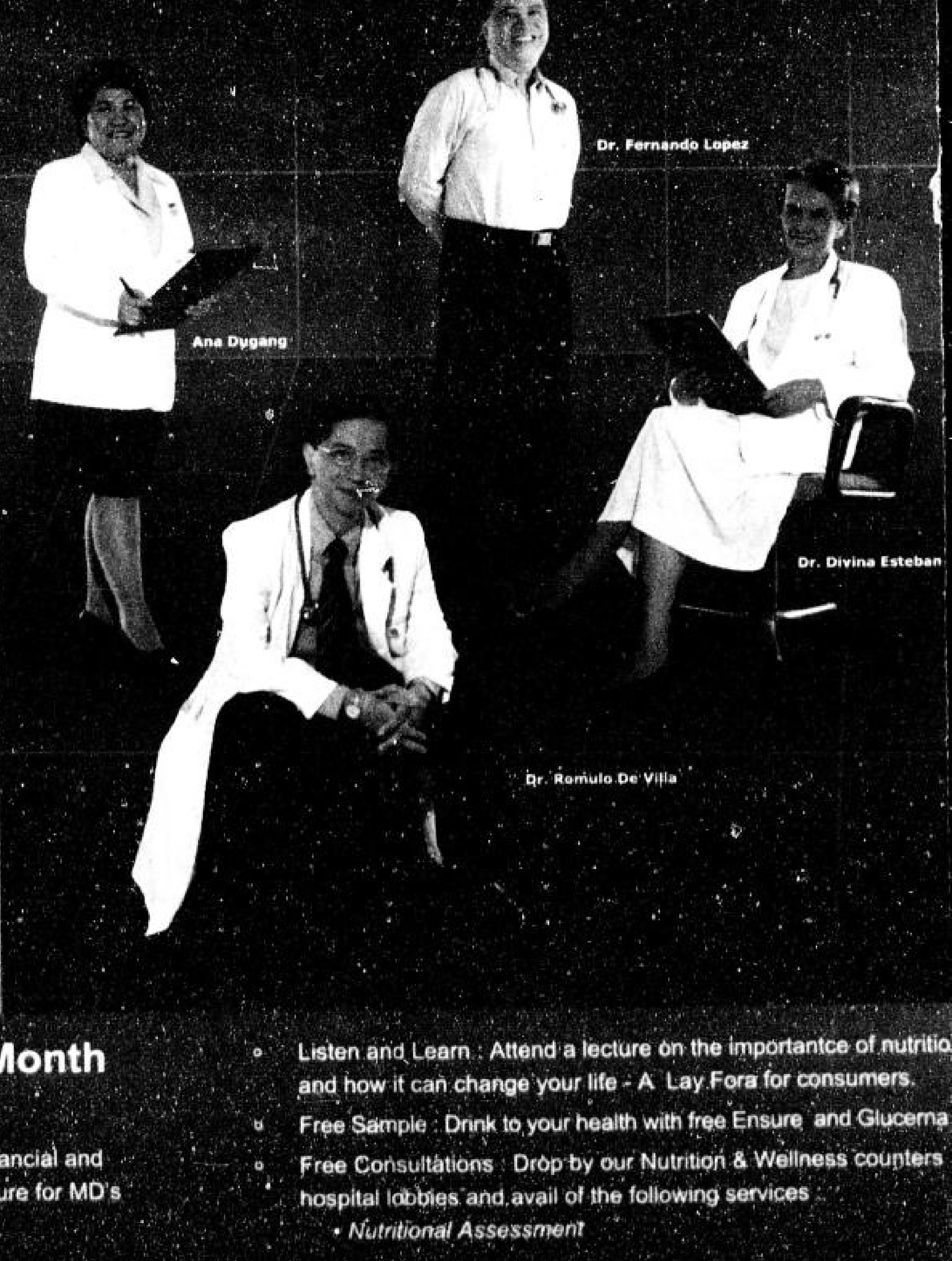

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it a reminder of the natural s we're blessed with, from g beaches, coral-fringed is- d majestic mountain ranges. mention the kaleidoscopic fi- hat happen all-year round? ly, I think that experiencing or Maskara is just waaaay interesting than going .)

fore I travel

k it out for yourself and see if 't get the urge to leave foot- round our thousands of is- the world is a book, as Saint ne said, well this book is a t's about *our own* world, and ng its pages, we get a better our own special story in it.

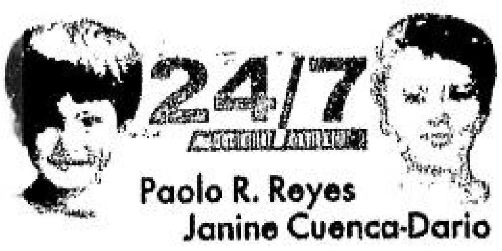
o a copy of Lonely Planet ries at Fully Booked Rockwell, lls, Gateway and Mall of Asia s.)

Triple Treat

Boracay Tropics Resort Hotel recently received the coveted AAA rating and accreditation from the Department of Tourism. The resort's blend of Mediterranean and modern Asian architecture served as a beautiful backdrop for a series of colorful parties to announce its formal opening and its AAA recognition. The self-contained, art-laden events venue had its lagoon-like bean-shaped pool and lush gardens as its focal point for celebrations.

Facilities may be viewed at www.boracaytropics.com. Inquiries are welcome at their Manila Sales and Reservations office, telephone numbers 667-3974 or 667-3942.

The Night Shift



Paolo R. Reyes
Janine Cuenca-Dario

WHEN NIGHT FALLS, AND FLICKERing lights begin to flood the cityscape, it's hard to suppress the primal call of the party scene. But the free flowing drinks (and delicious eye-candy) shouldn't be your only incentive to curb the yawns and crawl out of bed. Take a detour from the tried-and-tested route and consider, if you will, a few wholesome—and healthy!—alternatives.

Bend it like Bikram

Blending sacred moves with scorching temperatures, Bikram Yoga (informally known as "hot yoga") is becoming the hottest form of exercise in town ... literally. In a room where the thermostat is perpetually set at triple digits, addicted participants sweat away the toxins, as well as their troubles.

Bikram Yoga Manila [15/F, 88 Corporate Center, 141 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati, phone: 889-1011, bikramyogamanila.com] offers 8 p.m. classes from Monday to Thursday; while Bikram yogi Pye Trinidad [phone: 0917-8340659; gypsyogini@gmail.com] holds 7:30 p.m. classes in Dasmariñas Village, Makati.

Super human agility is not a requirement, mind you. But after stretching your way through 26 poses in a 90-minute period, you get a total body workout. The long-term results? Improved flexibility. Toned muscles. A sense of well-being. Now, that's hot.

All-night exercise

The wildly erratic work hours of call center agents, flight attendants, and F&B professionals shouldn't keep 'em from clocking in at the gym. But where can the late night fitness freak sweat it out at the most ungodly hours?

Enter Planet Infinity [Crossroad 77 Center, Mother Ignacia cor. Scout Reyes Sts., Quezon City, phone: 410-7926], the first 24-hour gym in the country. Aside from housing a calorie-conscious café (called the Energy Lounge) and a 30-ft. wall climbing area, they also offer aerobic classes and live entertainment. Taebo at 2 a.m., anyone?

Late night indulgence

While some of you are slaving away at the office at two in the morning, some people are melting their worries away at the Hotel Philippine Plaza 24-hour Medi-Spa [CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City, phone: 551-555 loc. 1586], where first-class amenities meet with a hassle-free, drop-in-whenever attitude.

This pristine spa paradise (with its very own therapeutic Oxygen Bar) offers a full range of facials, massages, foot therapies, and body scrub treatments. After a decadent night of debauchery, you can drop in for a detox and wake up without that nasty hangover. Sweet.

Shall we dance?

Get your endorphins flying off the charts by cha-cha-cháing your way into shape. Fueled by popular US television shows like Dancing with the Stars (or its local counterpart, Shall We Dance, with Lucy Torres on ABC 5), Salsa—the sensuous Latin American dance—has taken the town by storm. It's not only a fun way to get fit, but a great social activity where you can schmooze your way into new friendships.

Mezze [G/F Greenbelt 2, Ayala Center, Makati, phone: 728-8895] hosts a weekly "Salsa Night" every Monday with instructors from Salsa Filipinas. Or you can swing by Ricco-Renzo Café [G/F LRI Business Plaza, 210 N. Garcia St., Makati, phone: 898-2542] for free lessons every Saturday night at 8 p.m. Come and check out the food, and then take to the dance floor with your sexy Salsa grooves!

Other Super! 24/7 events:

July 1, Saturday

Village People & Sister Sledge at Araneta Coliseum; British Council's All in the Timing at Francisco Santiago Hall; Urban Groove: R&B Night at Citrus; Bringin' Back the Bounce w/ DJ Marie Garcia at Mati; Salsa Night at Ricco-Renzo Café; House Groovin' at Mezze; Sleepless w/ DJ Martin Pulgar at Embassy Club; Campusition Night at Mag:net Café; Pump Saturdays at Jill's; DJ Badboy Jeff at Temple; Soundsgood DJs at Embassy Cuisine; DJ Bam del Valle at Government; DJs Scratchmark, Bliss & Shorty at Prince of Jaipur; U Turn at Streetscape Shangri-La Plaza

July 2, Sunday

Mano a Mano: Manny Pacquiao vs Oscar Larios at Araneta Coliseum; Champagne Lunch at Paseo Uno; Champagne Brunch at Spiral of Hotel Phil. Plaza; Through the Palette's Eye exhibit at UP Vargas Museum; Architecture + Ecology exhibit at Goethe-Institut Manila

July 3, Monday

Sitti: Bossa Night at Stonehouse; Salsa Night w/ Salsa Filipinas at Mezze; FunkWhatyaHeard at Absinth; Ethan band at Temple; I Don't Like Mondays! w/ DJ Ro at Gweilos Makati; Eastwind Jazz Trio at Captain's Bar; Follies de Mwah at Club Mwah!

July 4, Tuesday

Cuisine Royale w/ DJ Manolet Dario at Embassy Cuisine ; Panic w/ DJs Alessandra Tinio & Chi Castañeda at Zen; Girls Night Out! at Mezze; Sparkle: Nu Jazz at Absinth; Kickback Tuesdays at Manila DJ Club; Two Rooms at Citrus; Guarana at Café Havana Greenbelt; Sitti at Tavern on the Square; Acoustic Night at Temple; Spirit of '67 at Captain's Bar

July 5, Wednesday

Remission is Possible: Benefit Bar Tour for Benjo Marquez feat. Anton Ramos & Owens Sun at Fiamma; DJ Boyet Almazan at Strumm's; DJ Steve Mills at Absinth; Discotech at Mezze; DJs Karl Ty & Cao Ocampo at Embassy Cuisine; Funksouljah at Manila DJ Club; Birthday Bash at Citrus; Bloomfields at Eastwood Fuente Circle; DJs Mars Miranda & Johnyverse at Embassy Club; Willy Wanka's Music Factory at Gweilos Makati; DJ Crash at Temple; DJ Brit at Government; Double Happiness at Prince of Jaipur; Jazz Night at Mag:net Café; Rockin' Revival at Conway's

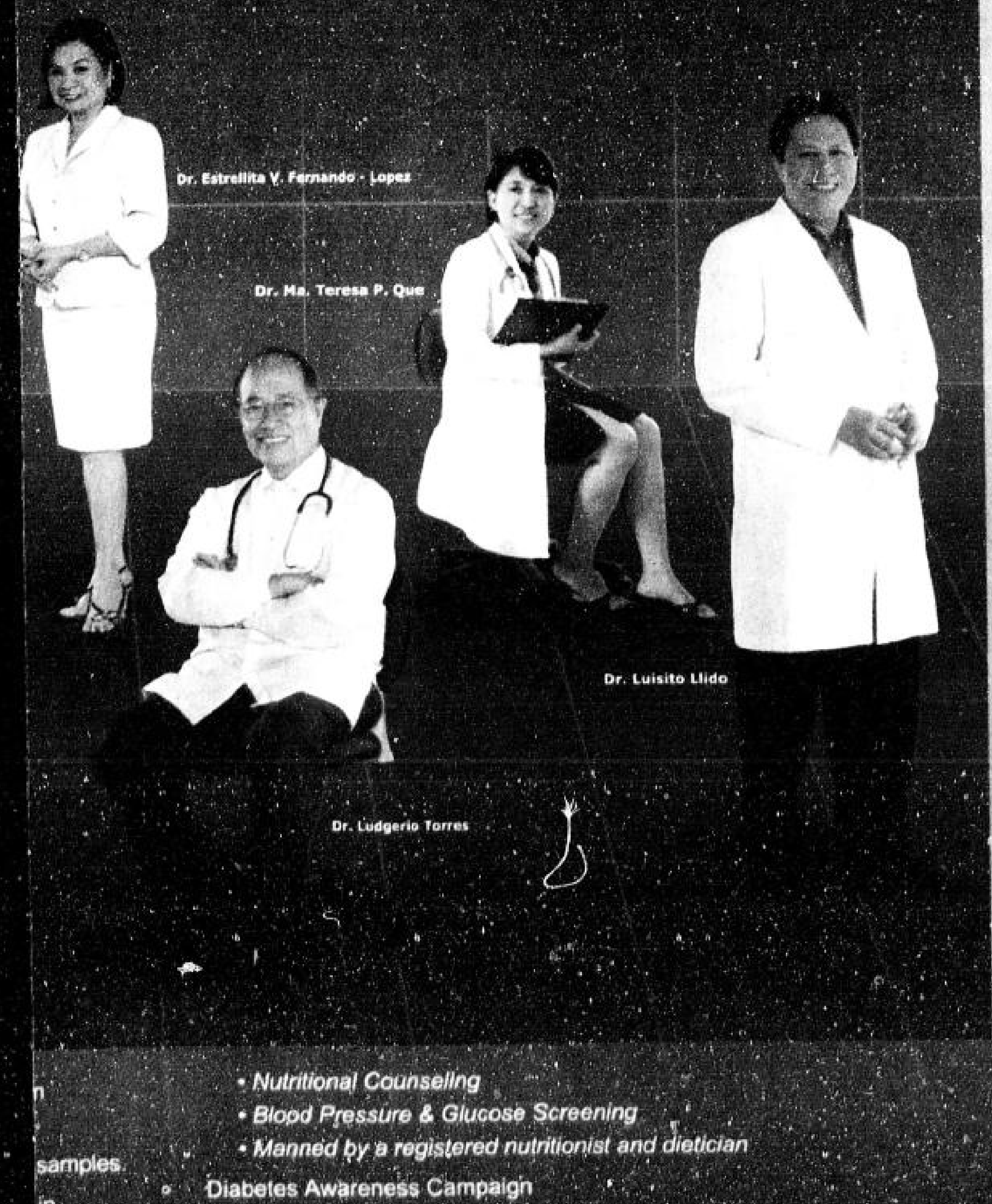
July 6, Thursday

Cueshe, Niño Mulach Experiment & 6 Cyclemind at Metro Concert Bar; Coup w/ Manolet Dario at Fiamma; Reggae Night at 6Underground; BBC's Sweet Suite Soul w/ DJ Mike Constantino at Sake Lab; GottaHaveHouse! at Capone's; Nuvo Soul w/ DJ Elian at Nuvo; Liquor Spill at Citrus; SPIT at Mag:net Café; G Lounge at Mezze; Latina Thursdays at Prince of Jaipur; Bloomfields at Arruba; Fluxxe Thursdays at Absinth; Thursdaze at Bed; DJ Badboy Jeff at Temple; Acoustic Jive at Merk's

July 7, Friday

Manhattan Transfer: Live!, Araneta Coliseum; The Blue Room w/ DJs JP Sacaben & Nix Pernia, Azzurro Linden Suites; Disco Mania, MDC Greenhills; Decadance w/ Boyet Almazan, Jill's; Tribe-ulence Fridays, Absinth; Style Fridays w/ Steve Mills, Citrus; DJ Owens Sun, Embassy Club; HouseBeats, Mati; MyHOUSE, M Café; DJ Marie Garcia, Embassy Cuisine; Happy Yummy, Government; Jive Fridays, Temple; The Jerks, 70s Bistro; Gogo Fridays, Bed; DJs Scratchmark, Bliss & Shorty, Prince of Jaipur; Mitch Valdes, Captain's Bar; Acoustic Jive, Streetscape Shangri-La Plaza

Schedules may change without prior notice. For more information and a complete listing of events, text 24/7 through your mobile phone and send to 2949 (Globe) and 209 (Smart). Log on to mag24-7.com or pick up your free copy of 24/7 NOCTURNAL NAVIGATOR at bars and restaurants around the city. Submit your schedules before Wednesday to events@mag24-7.com and mag24_7@yahoo.com



Dr. Estrellita V. Fernando - Lopez
Dr. Ma. Teresa P. Que
Dr. Luisito Llido
Dr. Ludgerio Torres

ON NUTRITION

Abbott Nutrition brought together the country's top ns to share their views on the way nutrition affects ields of medicine.

EATING WELL DESPITE DIABETES

Dr. Fernando Lopez, Surgeon; President, Philippine College of Surgeons (2003); Executive Director, Philippine Board of Surgery

Nutrition is considered very important to surgery. Numerous scientific researches have been conducted regarding nutrition and the important role it plays among cancer patients undergoing treatment - be it surgical, medical or radiological. The surgical outcomes of major operations depend, to a large extent, on the nutritional status of our patients before, during and after surgery.

Surgical malnutrition is mostly surgeon-induced. Patients are often kept without food days before surgery and maintained without food many more days after surgery. Ideally, we should keep our patients without food at the shortest possible time before surgery and fed as early as possible after surgery provided no contraindication exists.

Nutritional drinks hasten the recovery of patients after major operations, particularly for cancer. Usually, patients do not have appetite for food in the immediate post-operaive days, thus, we rely on nutritional supplements to augment their caloric requirements.

Dr. Ma. Teresa P. Que, Endocrinologist; President, Philippine Diabetes Association

An understanding of basic nutrition information is very important for both the diabetic and the non-diabetic. In these modern times, many people have adopted a high sugar, high saturated fat, low fiber diet and this state of poor nutrition has led to the great increase in diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer among the population.

Everyone should adopt a healthy lifestyle by eating at least 3-5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day, exercising regularly, maintaining ideal body weight, de-stressing regularly and not smoking. Diabetics who cannot eat their required share of fruits, vegetables and fiber daily can add complete and balanced nutritional drinks during snack time or as a meal replacement if missed meals are unavoidable due to various life activities.

Dr. Estrellita V. Fernando - Lopez. MD Vice-President, American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists, Philippine Chapter

Nutrition is very important because diabetic patients need to be highly motivated to follow the diet required of them. A recent study has shown that an adequate amount of monounsaturated fatty acids may be given to diabetic patients as the main provider of their fat requirement. This helps patients improve their blood glucose control. Fiber should also be amply supplied in the diet to increase satiety and to improve glycemic control by helping control post-prandial peaks. Eating foods with low glycemic index is likewise adviced.

A diabetic's special nutritional requirement likewise includes a readily available source of energy specially when they are away from home. This can be provided by nutritional drinks. This solves the problem of having to prepare a special diet for the diabetic and another type of food for the other members of the family.

Ana Dugang, Chief Dietician, Makati Medical Center

The incidence of heart disease and diabetes are more prevalent now than several years ago. These may be attributed to the quality of food being served. With the occurrence of convanience food and fast food, a lot of people are not aware that excessive consumption of this kind of food will eventually lead to weight gain which results in obesity, hypertension and diabetes.

All this chronic degenerative diseases will lead to malnutrition if not treated properly. Since one side effect of cancer treatment (such as chemotherapy and radiotherapy) is a loss of appetite, patients sense of taste and the ability to swallow their food is diminished. In the process, they begin to lose weight. Small frequent meals are advised since they can only consume so much. Giving patients oral nutritional drinks will also help increase their energy. A high dosage of these drinks will help in getting the sufficient amount of nutrients because it already contains the required amounts of calories, vitamins and minerals needed for faster recovery.

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- Blood Pressure & Glucose Screening
- Manned by a registered nutritionist and dietician
- Diabetes Awareness Campaign
- Sure Savings : Grab your discount coupons for Ensure and redeem them at any Mercury Drug outlet nationwide.

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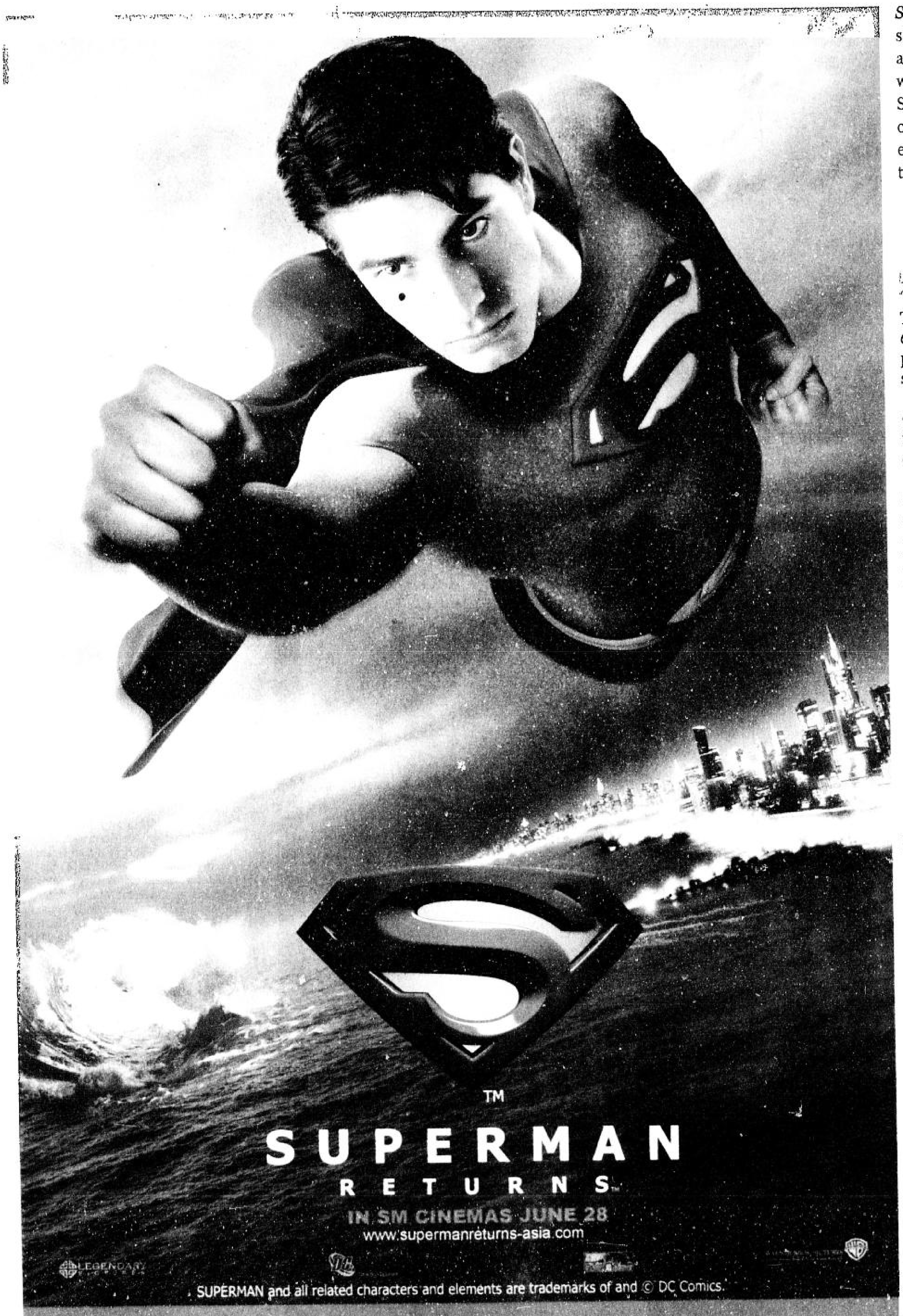
Superman Returns at SM Supermalls

The Man of Steel comes back to Earth in the epic action-adventure *Superman Returns,* a soaring new chapter in the saga of one of the world's most beloved superheroes.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SM SUPERMALLS

ShopMore BDO

SM Cinema Super Events

Warner Bros. and Global Brands SEA, licensing agency of Warner Bros. Consumer Products in the Philippines, together with Oreo Wafer Sticks, Epson, Hanford, and global partners Kellogg's, Pepsi Mirinda, and SM Supermalls, SM Cinema, SM Department Store and Toy Kingdom bring you the original superhero.

Superman Returns will be shown in 25 SM Malls with accompanying interactive events where SM shoppers and Superman fans are given the opportunity to vicariously experience the super powers of their beloved superhero.

Interactive Challenges

The interactive challenges are open to SM shoppers who present proof of purchase of participating sponsors' products.

- **Souvenir shots** with your favorite superhero courtesy of Epson printers
- **Superman toys, apparel and accessories** in all branches of SM Department Store, Toy Kingdom and SM Cinema lobbies
- **Free limited edition Superman Returns** posters for a minimum P300 purchase of Superman products in SM Department Store and Toy Kingdom (with DTI-NCR Permit No. 1348, Series of 2006)
- **Special treats** by Pepsi Mirinda at SM Cinemas

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

JULY 1-10

- **SM City Pampanga**
- **SM City Lucena**
- **SM City Clark**

JULY 11-20

- **SM City Bicutan**
- **SM City San Lazaro**

JULY 16-22

- **SM City Bacoor**

SM CINEMA

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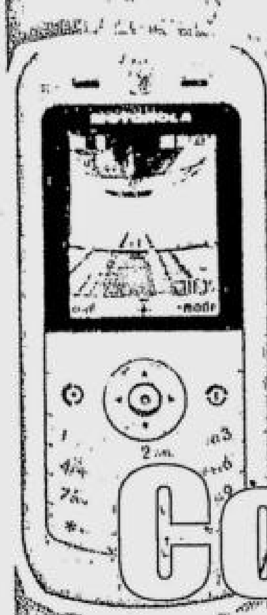

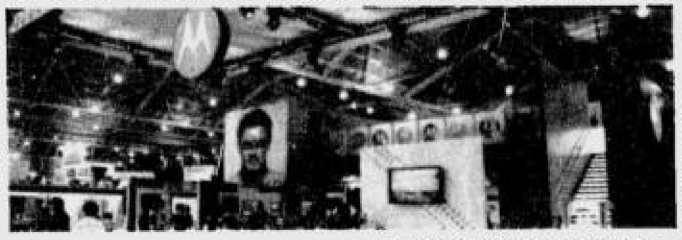

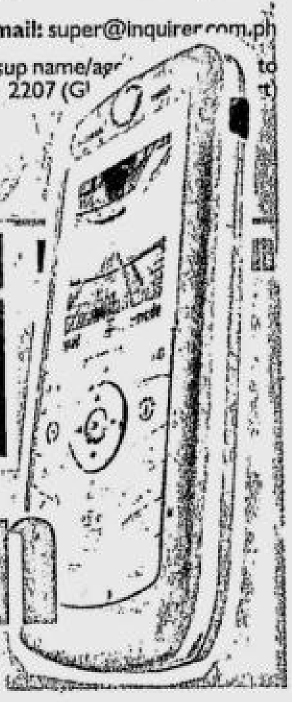

COMMUNICASIA '06

Connecting the next billion

See story on E2

Motorola launches new clamshells, candy bars and a new Dolce & Gabbana phone

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FROM JUNE 22 - JULY 09, 2006

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Per DTI-NCR permit #1606, Series of 2006

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ONE HOUR of SUN-to-SUN CALLS FOR ONLY P30.

Here's how to enjoy Sun Sulit Calls:

1. Sun Cellular Prepaid Subscribers may now enjoy one (1) hour of Local Sun-to-Sun calls for only P30 with Sulit Calls. That's P0.50/minute!
2. Sun Sulit Calls may be purchased via the following:
   - Via Physical Call Cards
   - Via Electronic PINs (E-PINs) purchased in convenience stores like Shell Select, Mini-Stop or 7-Eleven
   - Via SMS: Text VOICE<space>1, then send to 223
   - Via The Mall: visit The Mall>Mall Assistant> My Account>Prepaid>BuyVoice>VOICE 1
     - * For purchases via SMS and The Mall, you will need to have at least P30 regular load to convert to Sun Sulit Calls.
     - * Upon successful purchase of Sun Sulit Calls, you will receive a text message confirming your purchase with loading instructions and validity.
3. Upon successful loading, you will receive a text message reflecting your Sun-to-Sun call minutes & the corresponding validity.
4. To check your remaining Sun Sulit Call minutes and expiry, dial *221# and press SEND.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

- To maximize your Sun Sulit Calls, make sure you do not have 24/7 Call & Text Unlimited and Daylite Call & Text Unlimited.
- If you are still enjoying the pre-loaded service of your newly activated Sun Cellular Prepaid SIM (SIM with 7 days of 24/7 Call & Text Unlimited or 12 days of Daylite Call & Text Unlimited), load your Sun Sulit Calls after the free service expires.

- Get more Local Sun-to-Sun minutes when you combine Sun Sulit Calls with any of the following:

SULIT Calls 1 Hour of Local Sun-to-Sun Calls (valid for 7 days)	+	Unlimited Local Sun-to-Sun Texts and 4 Hours of Local Sun-to-Sun Calls (valid for 30 days)	=	5 Hours of Local Sun-to-Sun Calls & Unlimited Local Sun-to-Sun Texts (valid for 30 days)
SULIT Calls 1 Hour of Local Sun-to-Sun Calls (valid for 7 days)	+	Unlimited Local Sun-to-Sun Texts & 1 Hour of Local Sun-to-Sun Calls (valid for 7 days)	=	2 Hours of Local Sun-to-Sun Calls & Unlimited Local Sun-to-Sun Texts (valid for 7 days)
SULIT Calls 1 Hour of Local Sun-to-Sun Calls (valid for 7 days)	+	Unlimited Local Sun-to-Sun Texts (valid for 2 days)	=	1 Hour of Local Sun-to-Sun Calls (valid for 7 days) & Unlimited Local Sun-to-Sun Texts (valid for 2 days)

MOTOLAND. Super! exclusive photos of Moto PEBL by David La Chapelle

Connecting the next billion

"It is increasingly clear that, when it comes to bridging the digital divide between rich and poor, the mobile phone, and not the personal computer, has the most potential." –The Economist

Tim Yap

WHAT DO THE NEXT BILLION want? This was the core question that mobile giant Motorola seemed to have plenty of answers to.

At CommunicAsia '06, this region's largest event to celebrate the wired and the wireless, Motorola flaunted catchphrases such as "connecting the unconnected," "end to end solutions" and "seamless mobility."

The Singapore Expo became a playground for technophiles from all over, each one hungry for infotech more than the other. Looking like a school fair for cool global geeks, it was mobile madness, to say the least. I chose to stay and tinker with technology at the Moto booth, which looked like a rockstar stadium with a giant poster of a SLVR'D David Beckham staring down at cell phone-crazy consumers. Motorola Philippines' **Patrick Aronson** and **Mari Litonjua** became my mobile guides as they took me on a digital tour of the Moto station. Hello Moto!

Immediately catching my golden eye was the shimmering new Dolce & Gabbana phone (it even has a metallic eel skin case). From my periphery, I could also spot other fashionistas going crazy over the new colors of the PEBL, which now comes in—pumpkin! Yes, orange is the new pink.

Aside from the new colors of the Moto PEBL, another thing that made my jaw drop was the larger than life images of David La Chapelle for his Moto campaign—we have exclusive PEBL photos on this page.

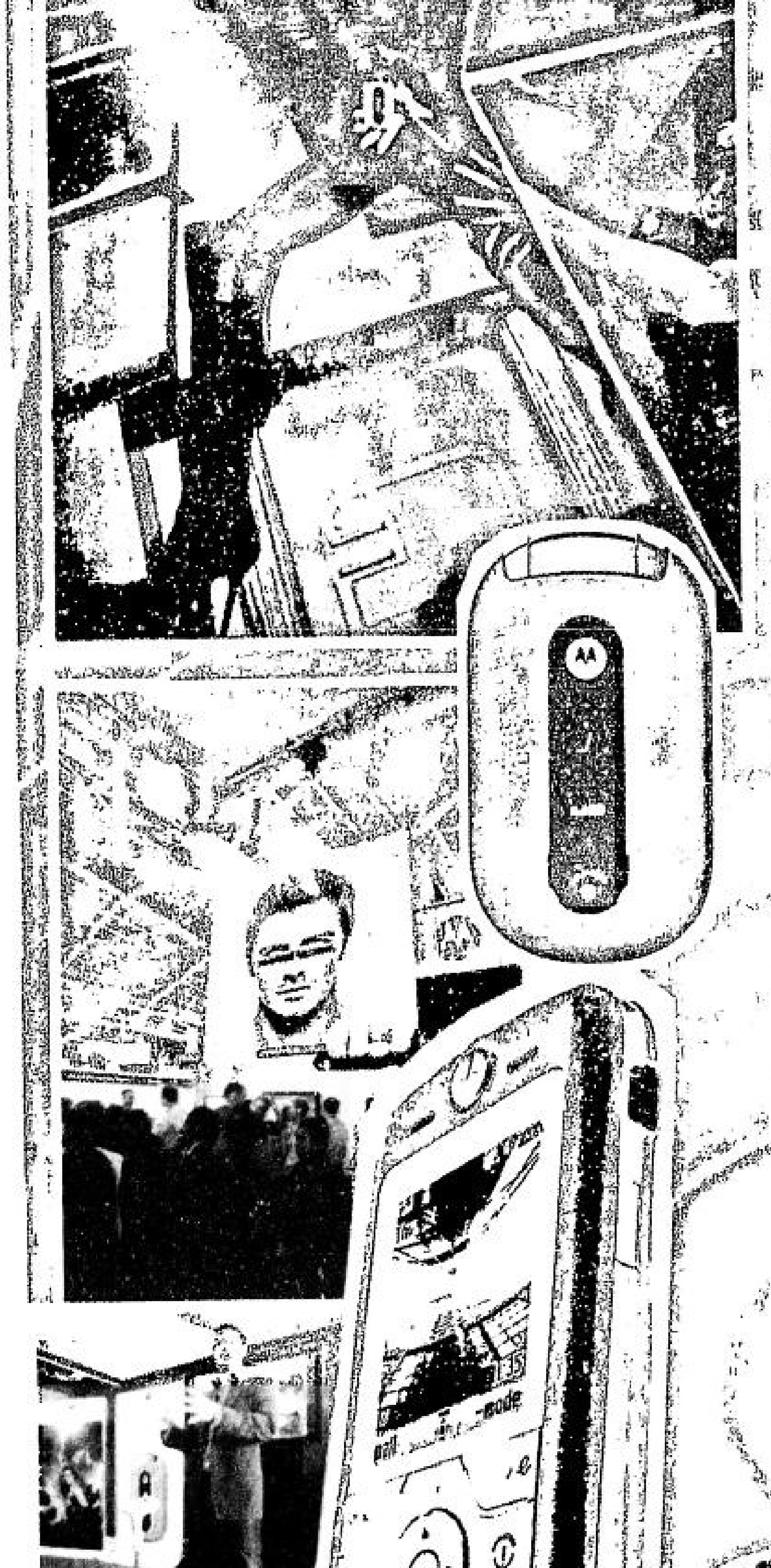
"We are in the business of selling clamshells and candy bars," said a Moto exec during their press conference. So, in continuing Motorola's bid for mobile megalomania, a Motomobile portfolio of five stylish new models was launched. Two value prized clamshells, the W375 and W220 bring color and style in one exciting "entertainment-on-the-go" package, while the W208, W170 and W210 take the candy bar to another level, at the same time maintaining affordability and Moto's iconic design.

Not only that, Moto interactive shops that serve as flagship stores, play place and service centers will soon be up in Manila—first in Mall of Asia and another in Glorietta. Motomaniacs should watch out for that.

So how do they capture the next billion?

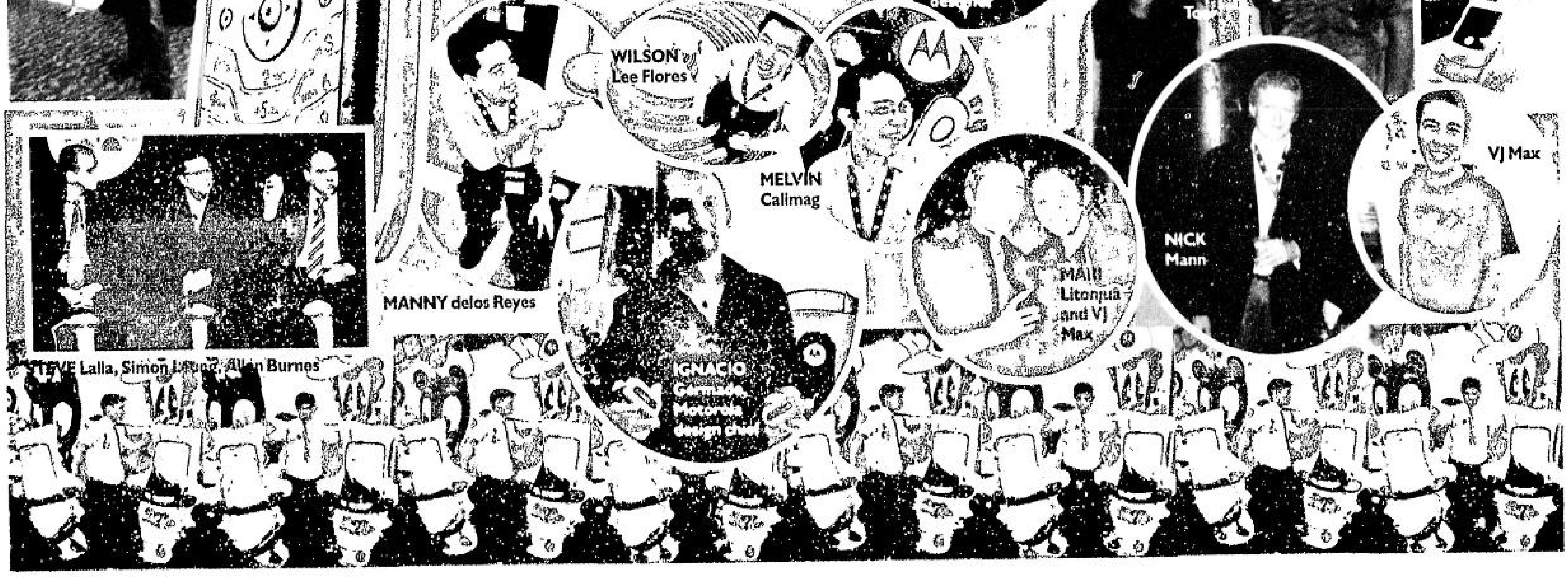
"By giving consumers the best of the basics, features that matter and products that look great."

Well say hello to that.



MODELS flaunting new models.

THE DOL[illegible] Gabbana [illegible] by Motor[illegible]



WILSON Lee Flores

MELVIN Calimag

MANNY delos Reyes

STEVE Lalla, Simon L[illegible], Allen Burnes

IGNACIO [illegible] Motorola design chief

NICK Mann

MARI Litonjua and VJ Max

VJ Max

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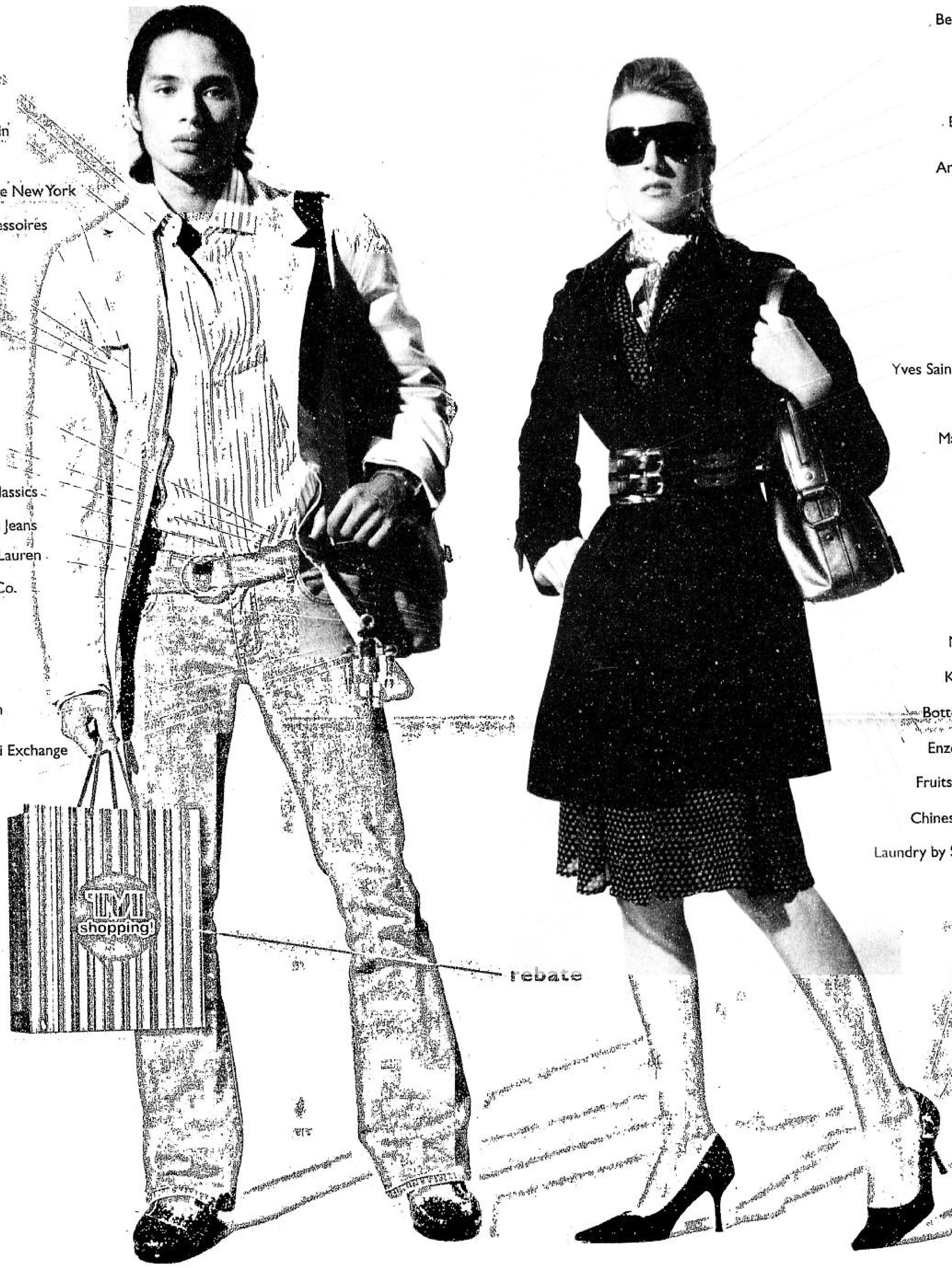
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Promo duration is from June 1 to July 31, 2006. Per DTI-NCR Permit Number 144 Series of 2006

Issued by Metrobank Card Corporation, a joint venture of METROBANK and ANZ

ETHOS executive creative director Mannix Peña

There was more than one superhero at that Superman screening

eccp
MAKE-A-WISH
MAKE

Angels and heroes

By Pam Pastor

THE WORLD HAS welcomed the return of Superman with open arms.

Virtually every theater in the country has been showing the film since Wednesday, with special screenings and exclusive premieres rolling left and right.

The one I attended was extra-special, because it was for the children of Make-A-Wish Foundation.

To celebrate its first year, creative solutions and design company Ethos chose to hold First Night, a special movie night for the MAWF children, held at the Rockwell Power Plant Mall. Ethos Executive Creative Director Mannix Peña, said that it was the firm's way of sharing its success with its friends and supporters.

Mannix had been a MAWF supporter when he was still in Canada. "Now that I'm back here and have the opportunity to help, I make sure that Ethos Strategy will carry this philosophy that I always believe in-that life is mainly about living it well for yourself and others. And I'll do what I can to share this vision and show others that they can do the same," he said.

When Mannix told the people behind MAWF that the institution was the chosen beneficiary of the celebration, they were thrilled

MAKE-A-Wish Foundation president Kahlil Bagatsing gives the kids a warm, big hug.

Angelica Marucut, Fund Raising Officer of MAWF, said: "It was a wish come true. We have long been planning to take the kids to a movie night and organize a fund-raising."

Funds and pledges raised that night will go to MAWF, to help mobilize and continue the foundation's quest of turning the dreams of children with life-threatening illnesses into reality.

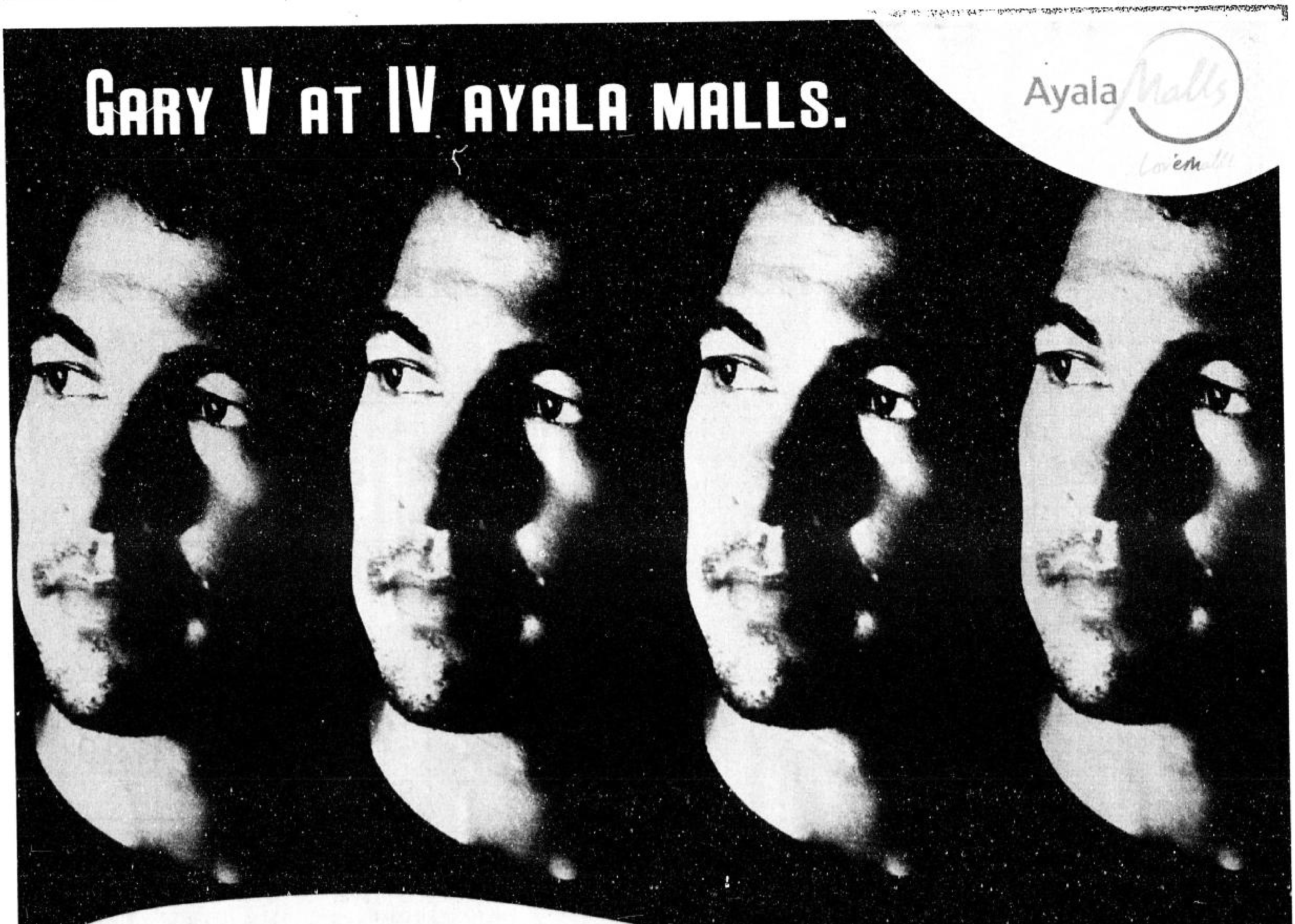
That night, guests enjoyed goodies from the sumptuous spread that had been set up by French Baker. And as everyone walked into the theater, they were handed black boxes containing caramel popcorn and drinks. Prizes were also raffled off for the attendees—nail pampering gift certificates from Nail Spa, jewelry from Morellato, a watch from Officina del Tempo, and an Escada bag.

It was a memorable night both for the kids and the grownups.

Ethos promises that this is just the start. They are hoping that individuals and companies would realize the need of institutions like Make-A-Wish and they are calling for action to address the plight of the needy.

The kids settled back to watch their favorite red-caped champion on the big screen but inside that dark theater, they were also surrounded by real-life heroes.

Superman will be proud.


GARY V AT IV AYALA MALLS.

Ayala Malls

A one-of-a-kind performance is coming your way at four Ayala Malls. Catch Gary V. live with his kids Gabriel and Kiana at this special family concert series. Watch them together with your family and loved ones, only here at Ayala Malls.

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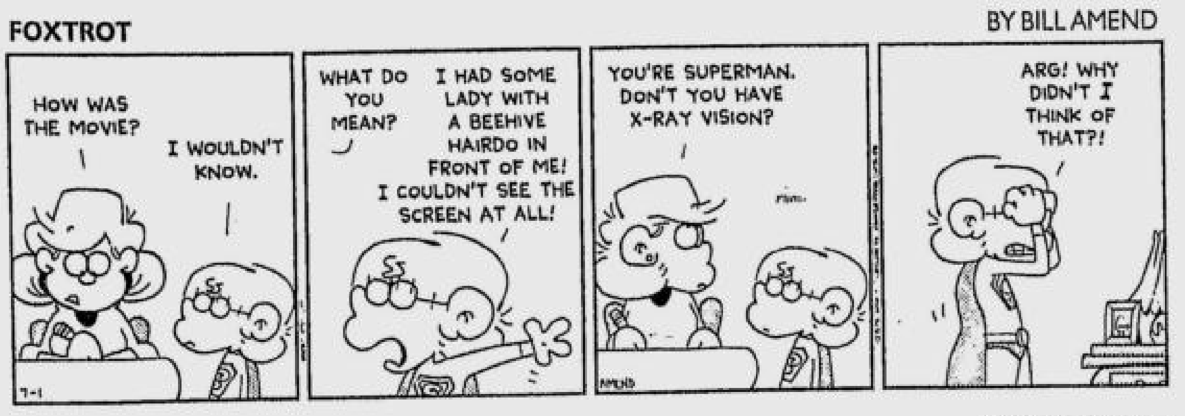
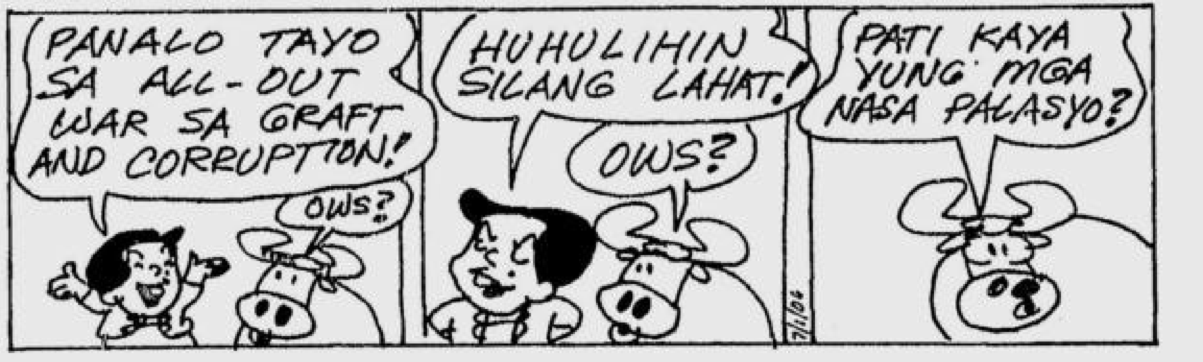
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


HOW WAS THE MOVIE?
I WOULDN'T KNOW.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I HAD SOME LADY WITH A BEEHIVE HAIRDO IN FRONT OF ME! I COULDN'T SEE THE SCREEN AT ALL!
YOU'RE SUPERMAN. DON'T YOU HAVE X-RAY VISION?
ARG! WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF THAT?!
7-1
AMEND

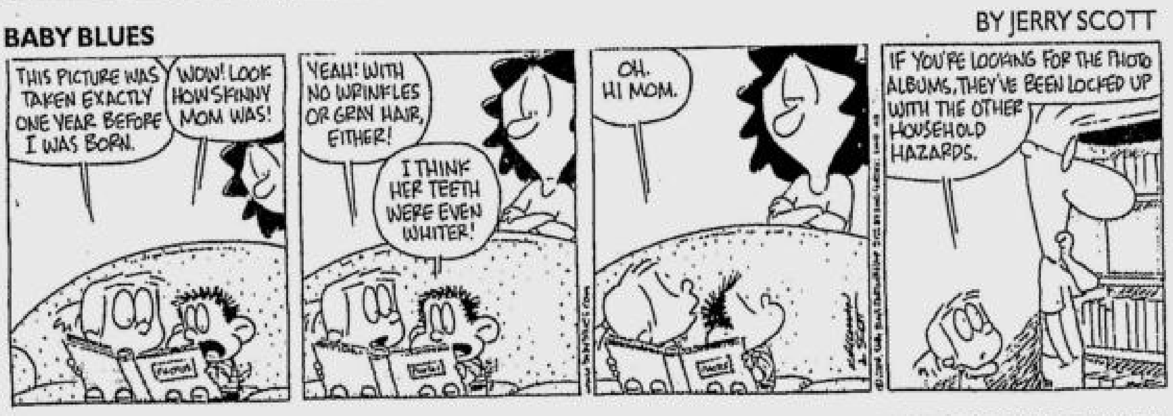
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


PANALO TAYO SA ALL-OUT WAR SA GRAFT AND CORRUPTION!
OWS?
HUHULIHIN SILANG LAHAT!
OWS?
PATI KAYA YUNG MGA NASA PALASYO?
7/1/06

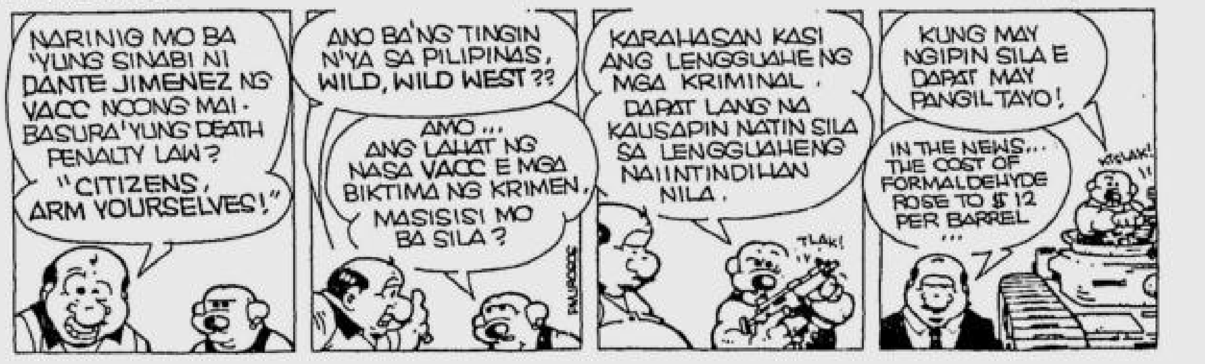
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


THIS PICTURE WAS TAKEN EXACTLY ONE YEAR BEFORE I WAS BORN.
WOW! LOOK HOW SKINNY MOM WAS!
YEAH! WITH NO WRINKLES OR GRAY HAIR, EITHER!
I THINK HER TEETH WERE EVEN WHITER!
OH. HI MOM.
IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THE PHOTO ALBUMS, THEY'VE BEEN LOCKED UP WITH THE OTHER HOUSEHOLD HAZARDS.

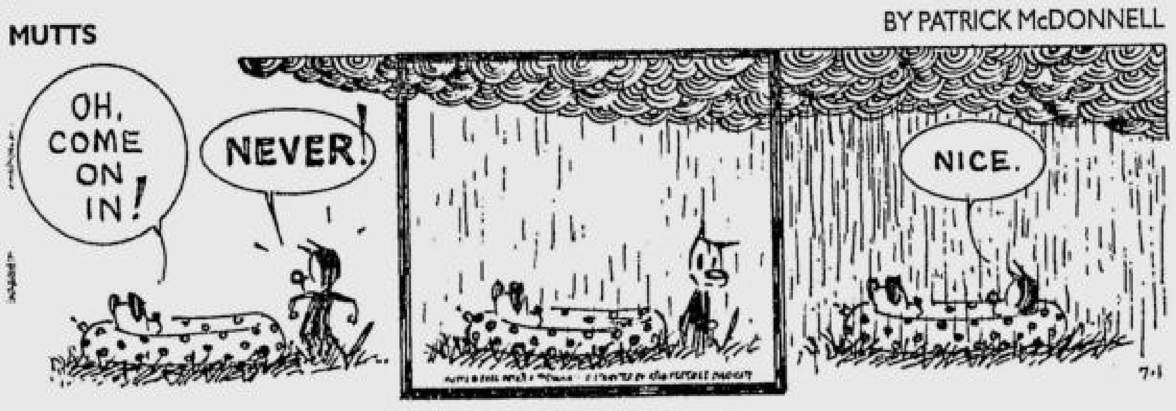
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


NARINIG MO BA 'YUNG SINABI NI DANTE JIMENEZ NG VACC NOONG MAI-BASURA 'YUNG DEATH PENALTY LAW? "CITIZENS, ARM YOURSELVES!"
ANO BA'NG TINGIN N'YA SA PILIPINAS, WILD, WILD WEST??
AMO... ANG LAHAT NG NASA VACC E MGA BIKTIMA NG KRIMEN. MASISISI MO BA SILA?
KARAHASAN KASI ANG LENGGUAHE NG MGA KRIMINAL. DAPAT LANG NA KAUSAPIN NATIN SILA SA LENGGUAHENG NAIINTINDIHAN NILA.
TLAK!
KUNG MAY NGIPIN SILA E DAPAT MAY PANGIL TAYO!
IN THE NEWS... THE COST OF FORMALDEHYDE ROSE TO $12 PER BARREL...

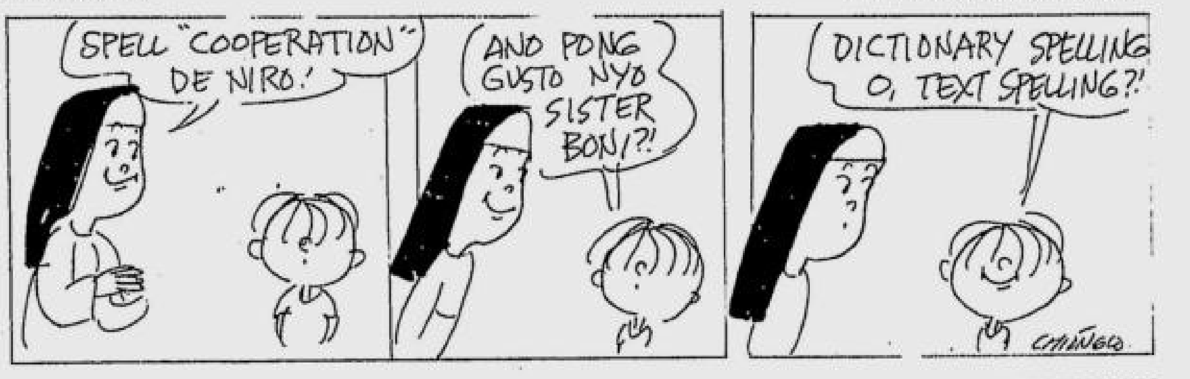
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


OH, COME ON IN!
NEVER!
NICE.
7-1

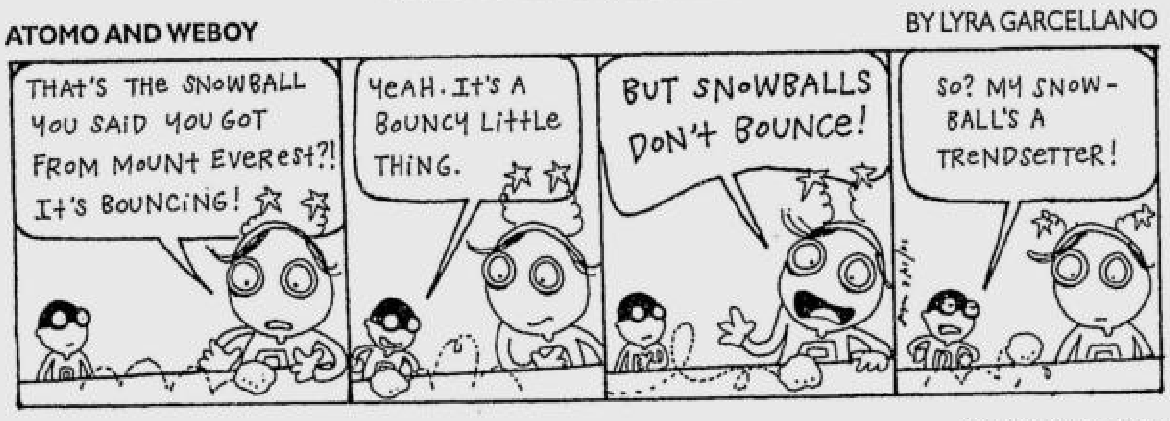
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


SPELL "COOPERATION" DE NIRO!
ANO PONG GUSTO NYO SISTER BONI?!
DICTIONARY SPELLING O, TEXT SPELLING?!
CHIONGLO

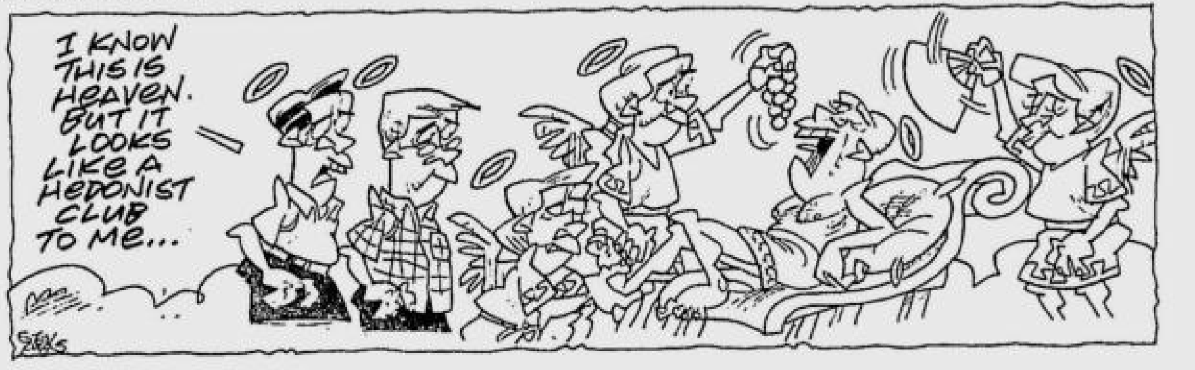
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


THAT'S THE SNOWBALL YOU SAID YOU GOT FROM MOUNT EVEREST?! IT'S BOUNCING!
YEAH. IT'S A BOUNCY LITTLE THING.
BUT SNOWBALLS DON'T BOUNCE!
SO? MY SNOWBALL'S A TRENDSETTER!

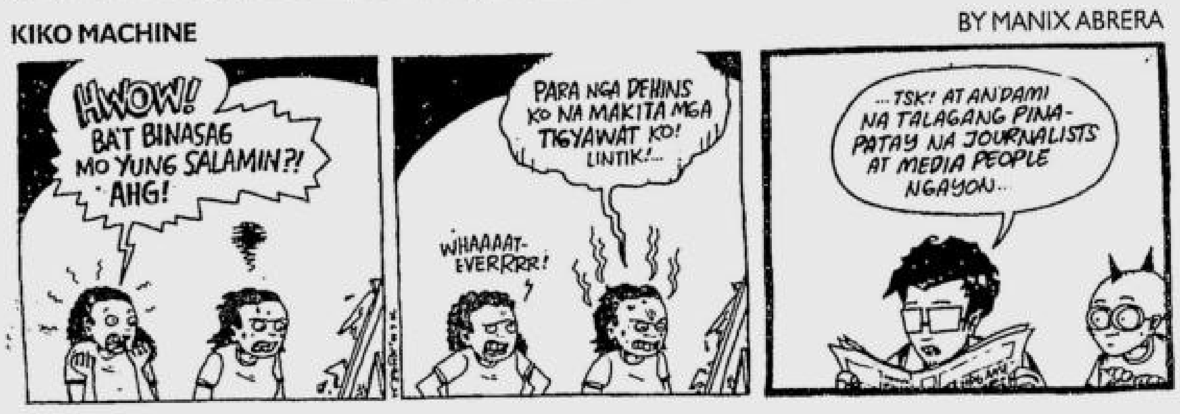
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


I KNOW THIS IS HEAVEN. BUT IT LOOKS LIKE A HEDONIST CLUB TO ME...

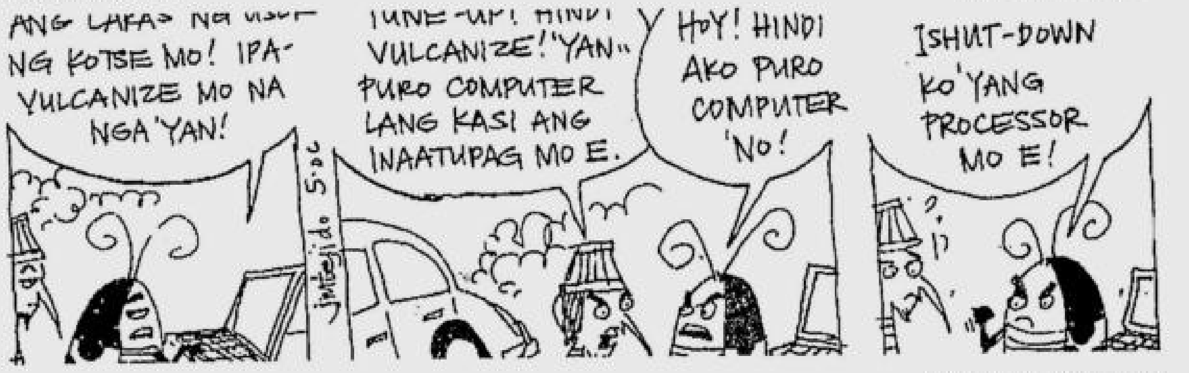
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HWOW! BA'T BINASAG MO YUNG SALAMIN?! AHG!
PARA NGA DEHINS KO NA MAKITA MGA TIGYAWAT KO! LINTIK!...
WHAAAAT-EVERRRR!
...TSK! AT AN'DAMI NA TALAGANG PINAPATAY NA JOURNALISTS AT MEDIA PEOPLE NGAYON...

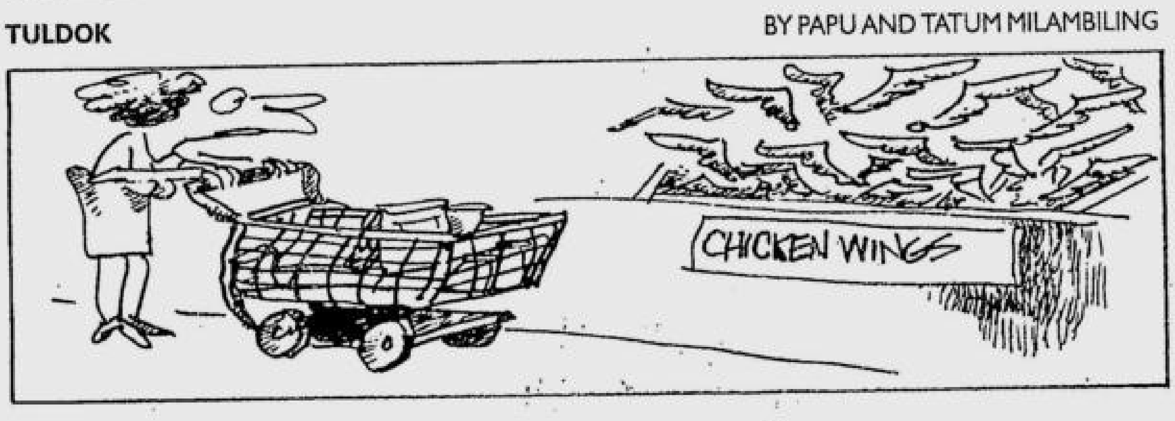
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANG LAKAS NG USO NG KOTSE MO! IPA-VULCANIZE MO NA NGA 'YAN!
TUNE-UP! HINDI VULCANIZE! 'YAN' PURO COMPUTER LANG KASI ANG INAATUPAG MO E.
HOY! HINDI AKO PURO COMPUTER 'NO!
ISHUT-DOWN KO 'YANG PROCESSOR MO E!

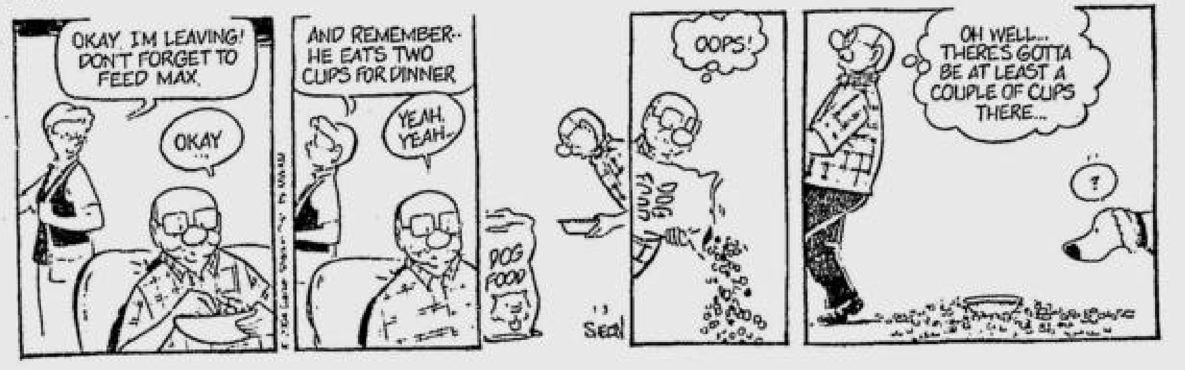
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

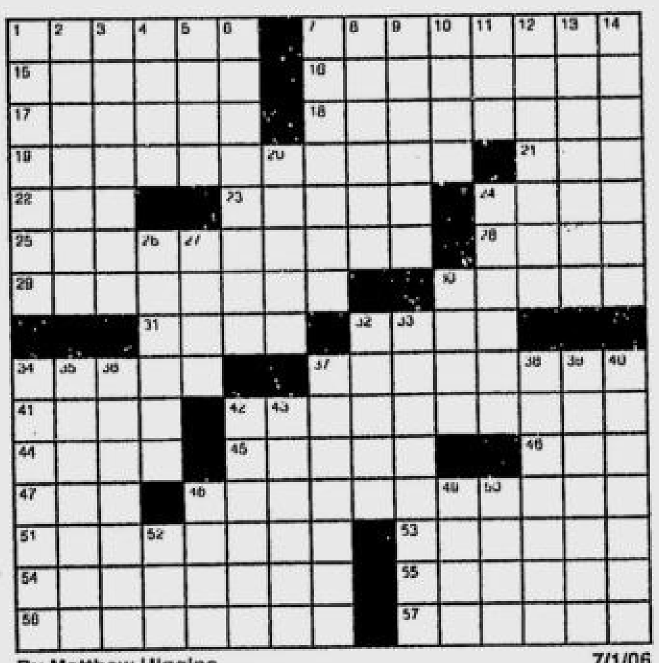

CHICKEN WINGS

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


OKAY, I'M LEAVING! DON'T FORGET TO FEED MAX.
OKAY
AND REMEMBER. HE EATS TWO CUPS FOR DINNER
YEAH, YEAH...
DOG FOOD
OOPS!
OH WELL... THERE'S GOTTA BE AT LEAST A COUPLE OF CUPS THERE...
?

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Matthew Higgins
Concord, NH

7/1/06

ACROSS
1 Come within sight
7 Glued
15 Outer edge of a cut gem
16 Large
17 Garland for the head
18 Certain protozoans
19 Alcoholic beverages
21 Alias letters
22 Highlands' refusal
23 Very short time
24 Blue dye
25 Subjected to privation
28 __ Cong
29 Precedent setter
30 Thunder and laughter sounds
31 Orion feature
32 Make indistinct
34 Church recesses
37 Gorbachev policy
41 Permits to
42 Long-distance runner
44 Ill-mannered child
45 Dwelling
46 Notable time
47 Psychic's letters
48 Increased the severity of
51 Rock similar to limestone
53 Thyroid treatment
54 Short, witty remark
55 Three-molecule combo
56 Shop dealing in tack
57 Records

DOWN
1 Contrary to
2 Like a feather
3 Babblers
4 Caribbean taro
5 Answer-man Trebek
6 Remission
7 Euphoric drug
8 Manifest
9 Thawed
10 Greek goddess of discord
11 High-level DC grp.
12 Oberon's wife
13 Hebrew prophet in Babylon
14 Purifies seawater
20 Reach a high point
24 Entrance to Hades
26 Under ideal circumstances
27 Clinches
30 Shove
32 Dashing young man
33 Red soil
34 Planetary reflections
35 Public image
36 Fastened mechanically
37 Comestibles store
38 Former
39 More tranquil
40 Stock exchange people
42 Kingston or Kumin
43 Decreaser
48 Runner Zatopek
49 Brought into being
50 Mino entrance
52 Antiquated

Friday's Puzzle Solved

Q	T	I	P	■	P	I	L	E	D	■	S	A	M	I
O	R	S	O	■	A	B	A	T	E	■	E	N	I	D
M	A	U	L	■	T	E	L	A	W	R	E	N	C	E
■	■	■	A	S	T	R	A	L	■	O	H	A	R	A
H	E	N	R	Y	I	I	■	■	S	T	E	N	O	S
E	X	L	I	B	■	A	V	A	T	A	R	■	■	■
I	C	E	S	I	N	■	I	D	A	■	E	N	C	E
D	E	R	■	L	O	R	D	J	I	M	■	A	R	T
I	L	S	A	■	B	O	A	■	R	E	J	O	I	N
■	■	■	N	U	B	I	L	E	■	C	O	M	M	A
P	A	S	T	R	Y	■	■	M	R	C	H	I	P	S
A	R	O	I	D	■	U	R	P	H	A	N	■	■	■
D	O	N	Q	U	I	X	O	T	E	■	D	A	Z	E
R	A	G	U	■	D	E	P	O	T	■	O	P	E	L
E	R	S	E	■	I	N	E	R	T	■	E	O	N	S

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7/1/06

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are generous, exuberant and a lover of life. You're both sensitive and caring, and powerfully capable. This attracts others to you; they admire you. Your private life is very different from the mask you present to the world. In your early 20s, you become much more flamboyant and dramatic! This year you need more quiet time to learn something important.

Birthdate of: Lady Diana, Princess of Wales; Deborah Harry, actress/singer; Pamela Anderson, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You definitely need to have extra patience when dealing with others today, especially at work. Computer crashes, staff shortages, irritable bosses and power outages could be glitches in your day.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Parents must be patient with children today. Everyone has attitude (briefly) today. Also, things will not go as planned. Such is life.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Don't be pushy with family members today. Ditto for your dealings with partners. It's easy to be impatient with others. That's why patience is the antidote to anger.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Think before you speak today. Go slowly in everything you say and do. This is a mildly accident-prone day. Interruptions and mix-ups in your communications are inevitable.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Stay on top of your money scene today. Make friends with your bank account. You could find money; you could lose money. Double-check your change in stores.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): The Moon is in your sign today, but it makes a harsh aspect to Pluto and Uranus. You feel very independent! You want to have your own way. But this isn't always possible, is it?

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Don't let something that someone says get under your skin. Be tolerant and understanding when things go wrong today (because they will). Your daily routine will be interrupted.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You might not like a friend's attitude today. Someone might say something that really surprises you. Remember that you do this sometimes as well. Be gentle.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Your dealings with authority figures, bosses, teachers and parents will be a bit testy today. Something that comes out of the blue could throw you a curve. Just go with the flow. Demonstrate grace under pressure.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Interruptions in publishing, the media and educational matters are likely. Travel plans could be delayed or canceled. It's just one of those days.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Plans to share something, divide property or decide on an approach to sharing responsibilities could get bogged down today. It's disappointing. Just accept it.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your daily routine will suffer from surprises from partners and interruptions due to power outages, computer failures and unexpected glitches. You can handle this

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

4		2						8
	8				4		5	
			1					6
	1			2		9		
		5		7			6	
1					5			
	6		2				9	
8						7		2

Difficulty Level ★★★★

7/01

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	9	8	1	6	3	7	4	2
2	4	6	5	9	7	1	3	8
1	7	3	2	8	4	9	5	6
8	5	4	3	1	2	6	7	9
9	6	2	8	7	5	4	1	3
3	1	7	6	4	9	2	8	5
6	3	5	7	2	1	8	9	4
7	2	9	4	3	8	5	6	1
4	8	1	9	5	6	3	2	7

Difficulty Level ★★★★

Are you a Super! shopping champion?

By Pam Pastor

GOOD NEWS SHOPAholics! The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) welcomes back the much-awaited Hong Kong Shopping Festival. This Discover Hong Kong Year, the shopping extravaganza will take visitors in a fun and frenzied ride, with the best bargains and fantastic deals that Asia's world city has to offer. From June 24 to Aug. 31, revel in unbeatable shopping fun in Hong Kong highlighted by amazing selections of goods, excellent quality service as well as late-night dining and attractive shopping promos.

Taking this experience to even greater heights is the exciting annual Hong Kong Shopper of the Year contest! Take part in this unique & once-in-a-lifetime shopping challenge and be one of the premier shoppers from all over the world vying for the coveted title of "Shopper of the Year."

To prove that Filipinos have what it takes to battle it out in the shopping arena, the Hong Kong Tourism Board is on the look out for gutsy, determined and shopaholic Filipinos to become the Philippine representative to the Hong Kong Shopper of the Year contest.

Avid Filipino shoppers ages 18 and above, with valid passports and have been to Hong Kong, are welcome to join the Search for the Philippine Representative to the Hong Kong Shopper of the Year Contest to prove that Filipinos can shop with the best of them! So, grab a partner and troop to the Glorietta Activity Center (Nautica side) on these dates: July 7-9 and July 14-16 and be a step closer in representing the Philippines in this thrilling shopping olympics in Hong Kong! Just present any P500 proof of purchase from any store located in the mall and tell us in the most creative way possible why you & your partner should be the Philippine Representative to the Shopper of the Year Contest in Hong Kong. After the audition period, judges will determine 5 finalists who'll move on to the next & final round to determine the winning pair.

Entries will be judged based on the ff. criteria:

Audience Impact / Appeal - 20%
Ability to express himself/herself- 20%
Passion / Love for Shopping - 20%
Knowledge of Hong Kong - 20%
Creativity / Resourcefulness- 20%

The grand prizewinner gets an all-expense paid trip to Hong Kong, for that once-in-a-lifetime chance to compete with shoppers from around the globe, and premier bragging rights as the "2006 Shopper of the Year"! Other amazing prizes are also up for grabs for the winning shopping athletes! So tap into your inner shopping prowess and flex those bargain-hunting muscles and attest to your love for everything shopping. Join the Search for the Philippine representative to the Hong Kong Shopper of the Year and don't miss your chance to join the shopping extravaganza in Hong Kong!

To know more about the 2006 Hong Kong Shopping Festival and Hong Kong, visit www.discoverhongkong.com. For more information about the Shopper of the Year Contest, please call HKTB c/o Perceptions Inc. at 891-3396 or 891-3485 and look for Aja Totanes or Frances Melliza.

Subic Bay celebrates 4th of July
Philippine-American Friendship Day
in cooperation with LEGENDA HOTEL

Come and Celebrate With Us!

4PM MOTORCADE
Assembly at the Waterfront Boardwalk
Route: Freeport - Barretto - Olongapo City - Boardwalk

7PM PROGRAM
Boardwalk, Waterfront Road
El Centro of Legenda Hotel (alternative event venue)

Barbecue Party with Live Band Performances
Featuring : Flintstones and the Gang (Songs of 50's, 60's, 70's & 80's)
Philippine Airforce Band
Oldies But Goodies
BONGO Band with Olongapo City Mayor Bong Gordon
Anna International Promotions
Special Dance Performance by the Amerasians

8PM FIREWORKS DISPLAY

FREE SHUTTLE AT KALAKLAN GATE GOING TO THE BOARDWALK starting @ 3PM

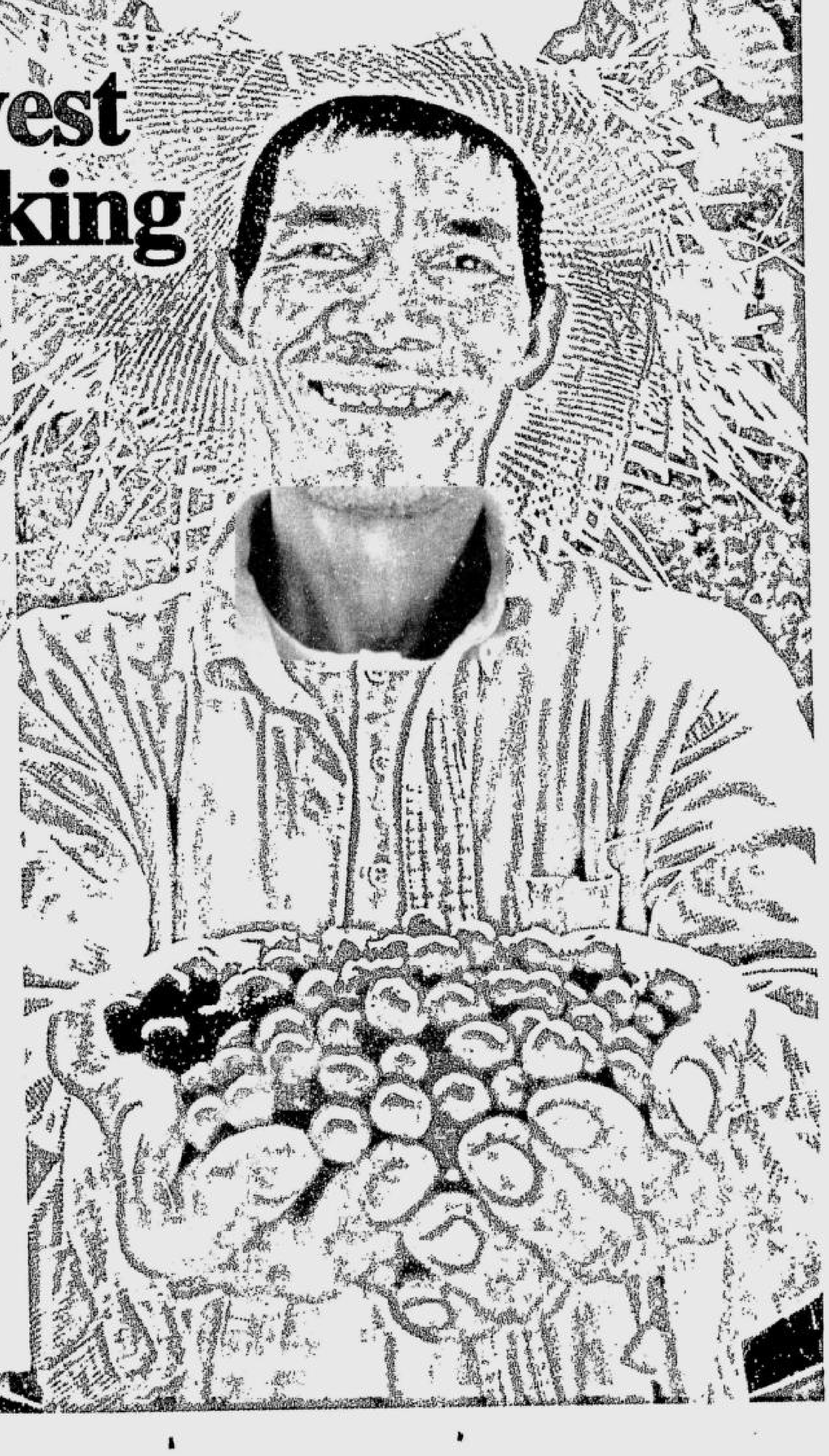
Subic Bay

For inquiries & reservations, please call SBMA Tourism at (047) 252-4123 / 4242

visit www.subicbay.com.ph

One special harvest yours for the picking

NESCAFE brings you NESCAFE Classic First Pick



Nestlé Philippines Inc. introduces NESCAFÉ Classic First Pick, a limited edition coffee made from coffee cherries handpicked at the beginning of the harvest season.

The new product promises a truly satisfying coffee drinking experience to its consumers, brought about by a unique roasting process that brings out the fresh, flavourful taste and rich aroma of these first pick coffee cherries.

NESCAFÉ Classic First Pick is a celebration of Filipino coffee quality and expertise. It bears the Kape Isla seal, a guarantee that the product uses 100% Philippine coffee. Apart from that, each First Pick coffee cherry is carefully selected and handpicked by skilled Filipino farmers, to ensure that only the highest coffee-making standards are met.

Nestlé has long been sourcing its coffee from about 100,000 Filipino farmers. It also deals with about 300,000 other people in the country who are in one way or another involved in the planting, harvesting, or processing and trading of coffee.

Likewise, the Nestlé coffee farm in Davao provides 80% of all robusta coffee planting materials in the Philippines. It is this access to coffee farms and field experts that helped Nestlé discover that the first ripe and red coffee cherries picked during the start of the harvest season, when carefully selected and roasted brings about a uniquely fresh and flavourful cup.

NESCAFE Classic First Pick limited edition is still available in 50g boxes. Grab one now, while it's still there for the picking.

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Start your journey to a fabulous shopping frenzy by flying Singapore Airlines. For only USD298, avail of an exciting travel package that includes a roundtrip Economy Class airfare, four days and three nights hotel accommodation with daily breakfast including airport/hotel transfers. En route, you'll enjoy KrisWorld, your personal inflight entertainment system and of course, the inflight service other airlines talk about. Contact your travel agent today, or visit us at singaporeair.com.

Valid for purchase until 14 July 2006, for departures until 20 July 2006. Surcharge applies for hotel stays between 20 and 24 June 2006. Price is based on adult twin-sharing accommodation. Discounts available to children below 12 years old. Single supplement surcharge applies.

Package price quoted is per person based on roundtrip Economy Class travel and excludes taxes, fees and other surcharges. Minimum two (2) adults must travel together. Valid for travel from Manila. Other terms and conditions apply.

For more information, please call SIA Tours Desk at 753-5151 to 52 or 756-8899 local 7001 or your travel agent. For departures from Cebu or Davao, please call SilkAir offices at (032) 232-6211 in Cebu and (082) 224-0902 in Davao.

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THE GREAT SINGAPORE SALE
8 WEEKS OF SHOPPING MADNESS

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Who's your Pappa?

WORLDWIDE WOMB, THE event organizers that brought DJ Tiesto to Manila is bringing in another talent that will have everyone bumpin' and grinding once again. Born in the Australian outback and raised by wild dingoes, DJ Anthony Pappa was a child prodigy when the Avalanches were mere snowballs on a mountainside. Having worked in the family business from an early age, he decided to strike out on his own and become an international renowned disc jockey, in the days when international renowned disc jockeys were as rare as tap dancing marmosets. If not rarer.

Anthony was alarmingly good from the off. Annoyingly good. At the tender age of 15, he entered Australia's DMC Mixing Championships. And won. Not content with this, he worked regularly in the clubs in native Melbourne, where he forged a reputation as one of the city's hottest DJs.In 1993. Mixmag organized a mixing competition (it was a forerunner to Muzik's Bedroom Bedlam contest) and he won that, too, with a brilliant and musically clever mix of funky and vocal house.

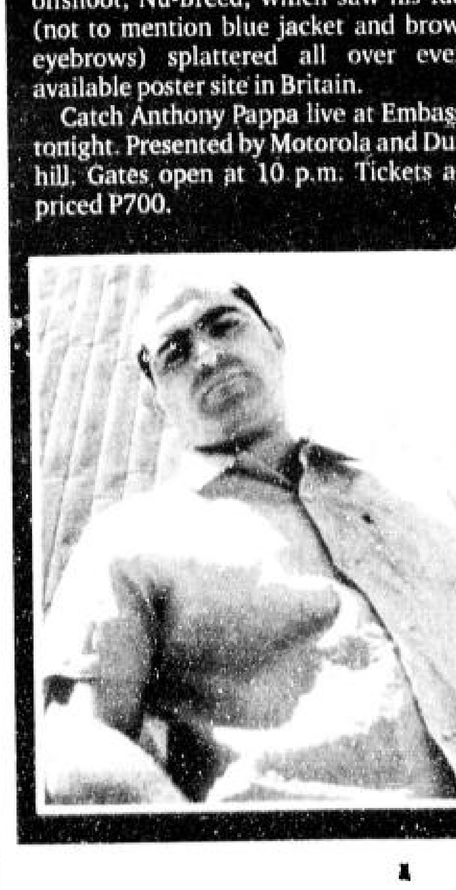
In 1994, frustrated at being halfway around the world from where the music he loved was happening, he hopped on a banana boat and landed in Southampton docks six weeks later armed with a bag full of records, and a cache of funnel web spiders. Hooking up with Dave Seaman and a sinister enclave of DJs and producers based in Maidenhead and Slough, he plotted his takeover of the world. He struck a friendship up with engineer/producer Alan Bremner and together they formed Freefall: by day mild-mannered janitors at the Daily Globe, by evening world beating dance music makers.

Gigs began to arrive as he established himself in the UK. First a trickle, then a flood (these days, the passport rarely leaves his back pocket). Both promoters and punters noticed something particular about the way he played: smooth mixing, musically complementary, great programming. Trainspotters noticed something else again: that his record box was organized in keys. Crikey.

Thanks to his nefarious links with Mr. Seaman, Freefall was signed to Stress Records, and they released two singles. Their debut, 'Shrug', was followed by 'Skydive', a tougher-than-leather main room anthem that said, "We're here, and we're not going until you've notice us." They were duly noticed. They have also done a few remixes including Beloved's 'Sun Rising.'

His Resolution mix album is Anthony's 7th in his career so far, including ones for compatriots Mushroom and Stress. Pappa was also responsible for last year's acclaimed debut for Global Underground offshoot, Nu-Breed, which saw his face (not to mention blue jacket and brown eyebrows) splattered all over every available poster site in Britain.

Catch Anthony Pappa live at Embassy tonight. Presented by Motorola and Dunhill. Gates open at 10 p.m. Tickets are priced P700.



Superman returns!

And we have some Super! questions

By Pepe Diokno and Tals Diaz

(Warning: Don't read on if you haven't seen the movie!)

WE'VE SEEN THE MAN of Steel cruise through the skies, back into the the lives of the little people who *really* need his help. It was a thrill to see ol' Clark fumbling about the Daily Planet once again (hey, even superheroes have day jobs) and jonesing over Lois Lane (hey, even superheroes get *torpe*). It was an even bigger thrill to see Superman in Pacquiao-like form (except he's tall, blue-eyed and Caucasian) deflecting bullets, lifting small continents, and uh ... lifting Lois Lane.

Of course, there came to that not-so-small matter that comprised the gyst and twist of the movie. (If you haven't seen the movie yet, do not read on) We're talking about the controversial plot point that should get the Catholic Church all Da Vinci-like on us. (It's a bird!) There seems to be a trend of powerful beings not having protected sex these days! Trust us, we didn't see it coming ... who would've thunk? Superman ain't a V-boy anymore! Naturally, a lot of questions started forming in our evil little heads. Allow us to enumerate:

+With the ongoing debate on whether sex education should be offered in public schools, this movie raises an interesting case: was Superman's carelessness a product of his lack of sex ed?

+Did Lois find it weird at all that after stripping Superman of his underwear, he was still fully clothed? Dibs on the shirt that says, "Lois loves Latex."

+If someone actually walked in on them, would they have exclaimed, "it's a bird!"?

+So Lois smokes now. Did Superman use his superbreath to extinguish her post-coital ciggie?

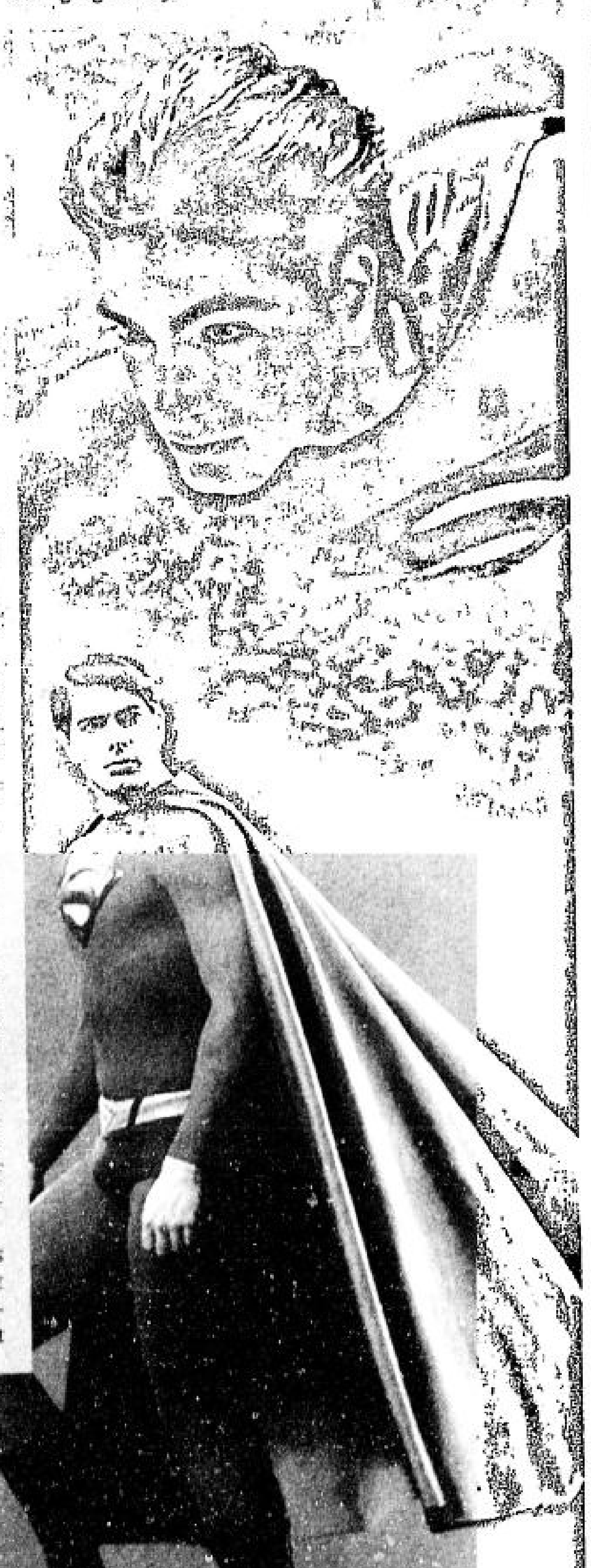
+While Lois was carrying Superfetus, didn't she suffer from some superhemmorhaging every time the baby kicked inside her womb?

+Why does Superman's son suffer from asthma? Is it because he can't breathe the air on earth? Is it similar to the problems of royal couples bearing sickly babies?

+Superman, lest we forget, is a freaking alien from the planet Krypton. So if he and Lois copulated, that's like two different species mating. Wouldn't that be like a bear and a fish mating? (Are we overanalytical or what?)

+Why didn't Justin the Superson get affected by the kryptonite crystal that Lex Luthor brandished in front of his face?

+On a serious note, with Superman as an iconic figure in pop culture, what does this signify for this generation? If the previous generation looked up to Superman as the ideal of goodness, purity and moral uprightness, how will the next generation see Superman? Thus, a whole can of worms opens up—for films not only mirror reality, they have the power to contribute to the ever-changing reality.



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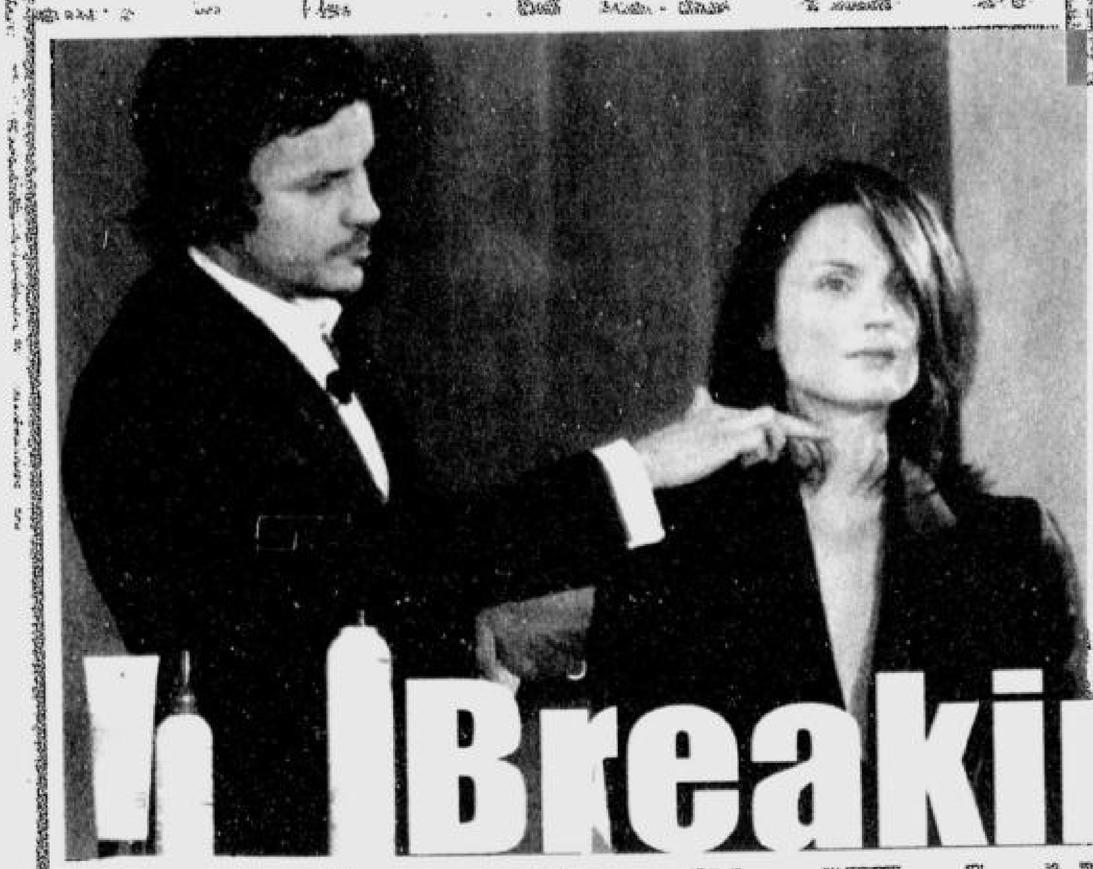


Breaking the beauty code

Text and photos by Tim Yap

YOU ARE INSPIRATION, WE are innovation." That is the latest gospel of beauty according to Nick Hotham, P&G Beauty's Global Communications Director.

I am seated in a Jetsons-meets-Clockwork-Orange-inspired, pseudo-futuristic lounge overlooking the Sydney harbor mingling with global experts on beauty as they discuss what lies ahead for vanity obsessed folks like you and me. The Overseas Passenger Terminal in Circular Quay in Sydney became ground zero for trend forecasters as they preached the results of years of research on consumer behavior, all under the umbrella of "Igniting the Future of Beauty."

No space suits in this bubble, just your chic and friendly black-clad lab rats, including myself, eager to know what the next big thing is. Curious, I walked around this Institute of the Future, ran past the seminar area and discovered four zones, including a sexy science lab, a luxury spa, a fragrance bar and a male grooming zone, all designed in a peek-a-boo interactive space that was meant to tickle and tingle the senses, as products of the present and future ought to be.

To know what makes us tick, companies like Procter & Gamble spend $50M a year on beauty consumer research. They are inspired by what makes our world tumble and turn, observing anything and everything S.U.P.E.R, and getting the help of scientists, trend analysts, celebrities and professionals to keep abreast of the goings on in this fickle industry. At this P&G Beauty forum, I got to hobnob with this team of experts whose studied hands help dictate the future of what we need in terms of beauty, skincare and grooming.

The Future of Beauty

Here are 4 major trends, from the gospel according to P&G Beauty that will dictate our (near) future.

1. 'No Age' Society

This particular trend focuses on "defying age." It is a new attitude towards aging, where emphasis is on better health for longer lives, a sort of a redefinition of the term "fountain of youth." People naturally want to stay youthful for a long time. It gives us a reality check, knowing we cannot kid nature, but we can certainly better the quality by which we live our lives. Key words are forever young, energy, young at heart, kidults etc. Case in point, Kris Aquino's Pantene Age Defying Shampoo, which continues to be sold out in stores.

2. Light

With humans having a deep seated desire for greater transparency and openness and a desire for all things "pure," this trend for light reflects a luminous, glowing, radiant and shiny aura that is evident in one's well being, which is seen on the surface of the skin. Note Oil of Olay campaigns and SK-II (skincare secret of the Japanese, and now, Singapore) ads. Or when hair reflects light, it is deemed to be healthy. On a deeper level, it goes down to personal spirituality.

3. Luxury

Luxury makes consumers feel more desirable. From designer fragrances to bespoke suits, there is this whole democratization of luxury. What was once out of reach is now available and affordable. If I can't afford Gucci clothes, I'll just buy Gucci Envy perfume. The buzz words "mass-tige," a hybrid of "mass" and "presitge" and "mass-clusivity" (from "mass" and "exclusive"), were born from this trend.

4. Male Grooming

Masculinity is in transition. From the ideal of machismo John Wayne, it has shifted to a sensitive Orlando Bloom. The future for men is high, as Super! predicted before that "men are the new women." Fact is 89% of men in the US and EU consider good grooming and general presentation critical to their professional success. Also, since the tide has shifted, men now need to learn new tricks. A global study was made stating that women are increasingly getting independent of their men while men are increasingly getting dependent on their women. The metrosexual is still there, about to be replaced by the ubersexual, another new breed that embodies men who do not just care about themselves, but about others as well.

Beyond these trends, we were faced by other beauty scene namedroppables, people like international hair stylist Sam McKnight, who's been responsible for the looks of Naomi, Kate Linda, even Lady Diana! His words, "Color is the new style—there's infinite ways of changing the color of your hair," is something I've adhered to for quite some time now.

I then went to the bar, where aside from colored cocktails, they were spraying fruity Lacoste scents. Walter Johnsen, P&G Beauty's resident "nose," said, "Fragrance is an amazing collection of stories. It is the ability to create your own romance."

He added, "Fragrance allows us to dream. When we dream, we begin to create who we are. The possibilities are endless."

Just like the future of beauty.

P&G BEAUTY. Inspired by Science and Innovation

A TOUCH OF LUXURY Makes women feel more desirable

MEN DEMAND men only products beyond shaving

LUMINOUS AND LIGHT. A need for greater transparency

HIS DIARY. Graham Johnston is the personal makeup artist of Renee Zellweger

FRAGRANCE BAR. G[illegible] [illegible] with [illegible]

LUXURY TREATMENT. The 'No Age' Society [illegible] the Pantene Shine Spa in Sydney, Australia

SHINE COSMO GIRL! [illegible] pampered at the Pantene Shine Spa

HAIR ROYAL HIGHNESS. Sam McKnight

BEAUTY MYTHOLOGY. [illegible] P&G

REGENERIST. Dr. [illegible] P&G

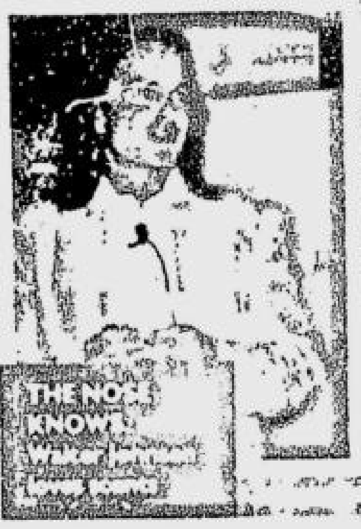
SPOTTED BEAUTY. Georgie Wilson [illegible] on a tour of Sydney

P&G BEAUTY's growing roster of products

A PLUS A. Ana Kalaw and Anna Legarda of P&G

METRO FEARLESS. [illegible]

BEAUTIFUL MINDS. Jamie Endaya and Ines Artadi



THE NOSE KNOWS. [illegible]

PREVIEW PAL. Agoo Bengzon, beauty editor

SK-II BEAUTIES. Anna Legarda [illegible] Ines Artadi

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- Eligible age/ Entry Age: 18 to 65 years old.
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- SM Advantage Card Members who are not yet covered by this Philam Accident Insurance Program from last year or its previous SM Advantage Insurance Program.
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- Disability Benefits.
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- Accidental Burial Expense Reimbursement.
- No Medical Examination Required.
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You have until July 15 to opt out. If we do not hear from you by then, you will be automatically enrolled in this program and 20 points will be deducted from your SM Advantage Account.

SM ADVANTAGE

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Megalomania

SOLENN Huessaff, Isabelle Daza, Candice Yulo and Yasmin Baumann

THE AYALA MUSEUM BECAME A GALLERY not just artwork but of the country's most beautiful women when Mega Magazine chose to reveal their Most Beautiful List for the year.

Mega editor in chief Carla Sibal played mistress of ceremonies. "Over the years, Mega has celebrated extraordinary women who are more than just physically beautiful but also gifted with amazing talents and a fervent passion for making a difference in their fields."

The crowd, a mega mish mash of fashion industry insiders, lifestylistas and nightlife mainstays savored the free flowing Moet et Hennessy at the open bar welcoming Mega's retinue of beauties, who were all transported to the museum aboard the Mercedez Benz E Class and S Class.

Looking around the stilettoed set was like hopping from page to page of Mega Publishing's crown jewel. Just like fashion, Mega has truly evolved.

Tim Yap

MICHAEL Salientes

MEGA's editor in chief Carla Sibal

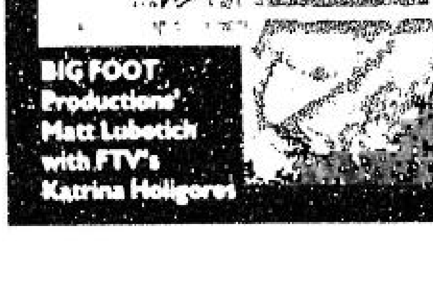
MARGA Vazquez, MMPI V.P. and Creative Director Lorraine Belmonte with Milo Vazquez

FRANCES Lim and Gwennaelle Ruais

PAOLA Tornito and MMPI President and CEO Sari Yap

COUSINS Angelique Villaraza and Andres Villaraza

LEICA Carpo



BIG FOOT Productions' Matt Lubetich with FTV's Katrina Holigores

TOXINS!
PREPARE TO MEET THY
DOOM!
THE DARK ENEMY APPEARED:
CIGARETTE SMOKE, JUNK FOOD AND ALCOHOL.
THE ENEMY WAS SLOWING HIM DOWN,
DEFEATING HIM. LIPTON TEA TO THE RESCUE!
THE FLAVONOIDS BLASTED THE TOXINS AWAY.
BEGONE, DARK ENEMY! ON WITH THE MISSION!
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